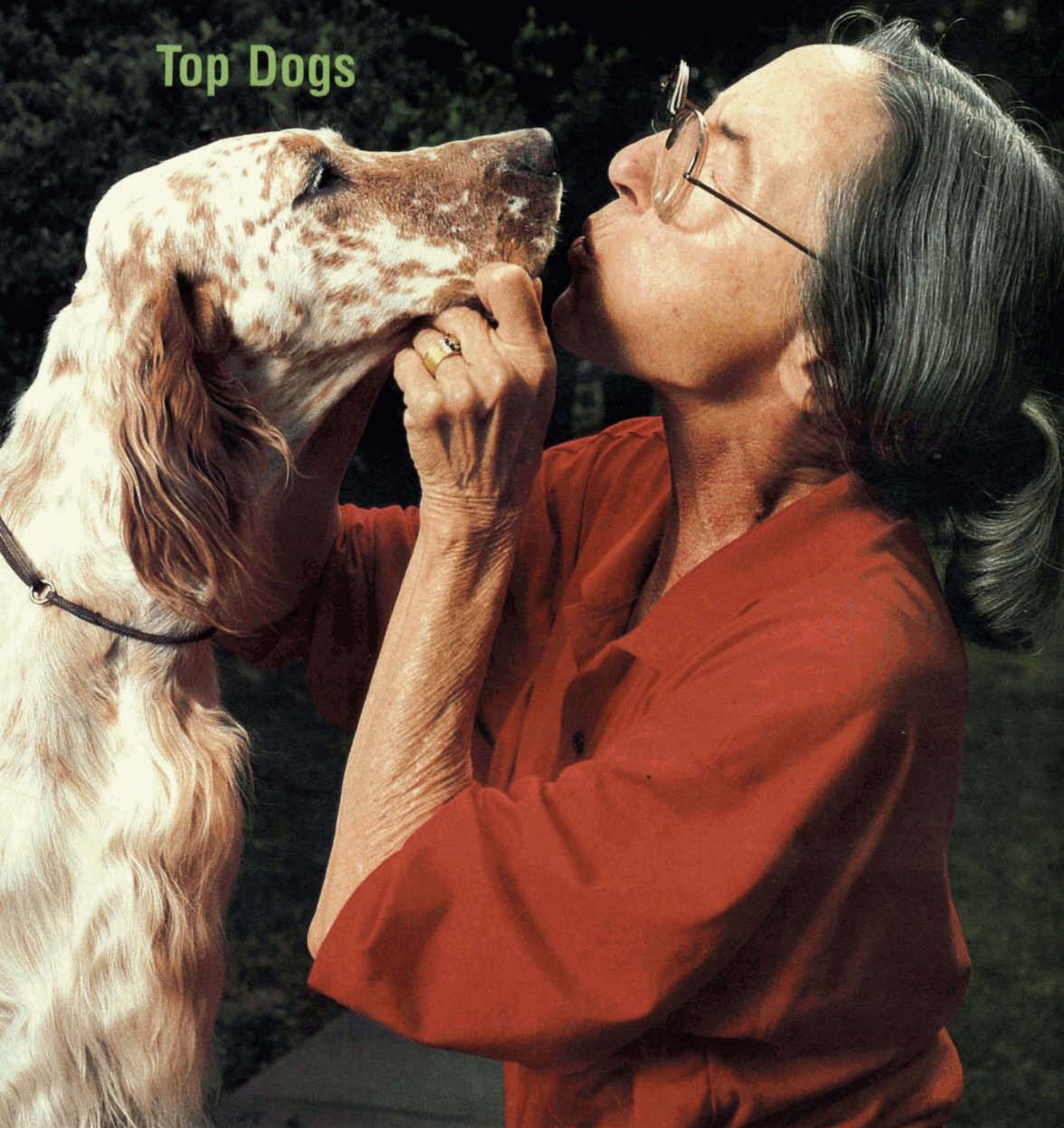


WALKING THE OUACHITAS • THE ONE AND ONLY WILEY POST

OKLAHOMA TODAY

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October
1988

Top Dogs





OKLAHOMA TODAY

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1988

Henry Bellmon



Governor

Volume 38, No. 5

COVERS



Joan Stainer of Tulsa and champion Suellen, one of the nation's top English Setters. Photograph by David Koelsch. **Inside front.** Sydnie Brown is showered with cottonwood leaves in Boiling Springs State Park. Photograph by her dad, Larry D. Brown. **Back.** Brilliant fall foliage near Spavinaw. Photograph by Howard Robson/The PictureWorks.

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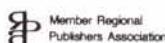
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Today In Oklahoma

As you surely know by now, Oklahoma is throwing a giant party all year long during 1989. Festivals will be held throughout the state, but especially in central Oklahoma, topped off with the U.S. Olympics Festival and its torch run to all 77 counties. Arts festivals, a folklife festival, jazz festivals and Indian pow wows, horse racing, softball tournaments, rodeos, square dancing and bigger state fairs. If it's fun, it's happening in Oklahoma in 1989.

The cause for celebration, of course, is the centennial anniversary of the '89er Land Run that started opening Oklahoma for settlement.

But what's a party without partygoers? You get to decide who you want to come. And *Oklahoma TODAY* will mail official invitations next March to all those living out-of-state who receive gift subscriptions, inviting them to come visit during 1989. Turn to page 37 for more information.

The series of historical articles featuring the people and the activities of the Territorial Period begins in the January issue and the Special Centennial Souvenir Issue will be published in March. This series should help lure your friends back for Oklahoma's big bash, ready to celebrate. What a great time for family and high school reunions.

☞ The 1989 *Oklahoma TODAY* scenic calendars are available with major Centennial events listed on the back. Beneath each beautiful photograph is interesting information about our state that you will enjoy reading. And there is plenty of space for writing in your 1989 activities. See page 44 for ordering.

☞ Why do so many astronauts call Oklahoma home? At least eight grew up as Sooners. Beginning on page 18,

Barbara Palmer writes about some of the early-day itinerant barnstormers, plucky predecessors for today's space pilots, along with their major contributions to the aviation industry. "I found the oral history tapes of these men just fascinating," Palmer said. The tapes, some recorded in the 1950s, are kept in the State Archives of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Wiley Post, one of the most famous of the early-day pilots, tested the pressurized flight suit and discovered the jet stream. Clay Lewis tells Post's story. The cockpit of Post's biplane and astronaut Tom Stafford's space suit can be viewed with other aviation memorabilia at the Air Space Museum of Oklahoma City's Kirkpatrick Center.

The State Museum, located in the Wiley Post Building, displays a permanent exhibit on Wiley Post's life. The museum also houses perhaps the most extensive collection available of Post's papers and photos.

As you read about these early pilots, perhaps you can understand why so many astronauts grew up in Oklahoma

and why aviation is such an important state industry.

☞ Jean Devlin writes about what Angie Debo's neighbors remember best about the state's most famous historian and their beloved friend, beginning on page 16. Public television will open its fall series on American history with a documentary entitled "Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo." Filmed by Holdenville native Martha Sandlin, the Angie Debo show can be seen on OETA in October.

☞ It was fun last fall to wander through the booths under the large, striped tents on the lawn of the Harn Homestead in Oklahoma City. If you enjoy the clever designs and the fine details of handmade crafts, you'll want to join the crowds in October at the annual First Lady's Bazaar. Ann DeFrangé writes about some of the exhibitors, beginning on page 38.

☞ The Ouachita Trail, a hiking trail dedicated by the U.S. Forest Service last year, begins in Talimena State Park and winds 225 miles through the Ouachitas to Little Rock, Arkansas. Senior citizens, young Conservation Corps workers and forest service employees labored for more than 10 years building the trail. A hiker can walk along the isolated trail, surrounded by autumn leaves and mountain streams, for five days and meet few others. Scott Carlberg writes about the people who live along the trail on page 10.

☞ Congratulations to all the *Oklahoma TODAY* Photo Contest winners. Some wonderful, imaginative photos were entered, and the judges had a tough time choosing. Next year's photo contest also will focus on scenery and activities in the state's parks. Winners are listed on page 36.

—Sue Carter

Next Issue: Join us for a Christmas celebration at Pryor's Home Rescue Mission and for a visit with eight monks at the Holy Protection Monastery in Forest Park. Then, for holiday revelers who'd like to stretch their legs after a satisfying Thanksgiving or Christmas meal, a couple of experts will offer tips for beginning birdwatchers. We'll also take you to southwest Oklahoma for David Halpern's photographic study of the Wichita Mountains. And we're happy to announce the beginning of two new departments—weekend trips and the arts—that we hope will help you enjoy Oklahoma even more. These stories and others in the November-December issue of *Oklahoma TODAY*.

LETTERS

I found out about *Oil Man*, the excellent account of the life and times of Frank Phillips and Phillips Petroleum Company, through my subscription to *Oklahoma TODAY* (a portion of the biography was excerpted in the May-June issue). The only thing I don't like about the book is that it's interrupting my studies so much that I have now decided to leave *Oil Man* at my office and read it only during lunch breaks, lest I flunk this semester's courses because I haven't been paying attention to schoolwork.

Writer Michael Wallis captured the essence and flavor of Oklahoma at its best, the Oklahoma I know and miss so much. Previous to moving back East, I lived in Oklahoma for 14 years. Though I wasn't born in the Sooner State, I've had a special place in my heart for Oklahoma ever since I can remember. As a Brooklyn lad learning the names of all the states in history class, the sound Oklahoma conjured images of cloaked bandits that scared me half to death. Years later, after my family had the good fortune to be stationed at Tinker Air Force Base, and I lingered on to pursue a college education, I realized I had been both wrong and right about my "visions." Outlaws and bandits indeed comprised part of Oklahoma's colorful history, but my exposure to the Sooner State also made me realize the unmatched warmth and friendliness of its people. To this day, I wish I had been born in Oklahoma. I consider myself an Oklahoman, and I'm hoping someday to return to live in Oklahoma and bring up a family there.

Raymond Rivera
Union City, New Jersey

I want to express my admiration for the article about the Mennonite community written by Ann DeFrangé ("A Separate Peace," May-June). This was not only a carefully crafted piece that satisfies the form of excellent writing,

but also the content exemplified a depth of research that surely exceeds the investigations of so-called nationally reputed writers. Further, it is obvious that Ms. DeFrangé did not antagonize her subjects, which seems to be the regrettable style of many reporters today. Her obvious acceptance by this publicity-shy group of people implies a discernible honesty on her part that comes through in the statements of her subjects and to the delight of this reader. Her work, accompanied by excellent photography, is a high standard that I hope your publication will seek to achieve regularly.

B.G. Schumacher
Professor Emeritus,
University of Oklahoma

Oklahoma TODAY is welcome in my family, and we are proud to have you each and every time.

I have visited your country only once, in 1986. All week we stayed with friends in Duncan. Lee and Paul Cornelius—both very proud of their country—showed me around with unselfish and heart-warming friendship. They showed me the hospitality and friendship your state—I was told and now know it—has a reputation for.

Thank you for bringing Oklahoma to me with your magazine.

J.J.M. Graus
Maastricht, Netherlands

I was very pleased to read Kathryn Jensen White's article about Sam Downs ("Uncommon Common Folk," March-April). Sam has been an excellent goodwill ambassador for Oklahoma for several years. I think it is so important for people who care about Oklahoma and its history to share their knowledge and enthusiasm, particularly with the children of the state.

Thanks for providing great reading.

Dixie Belcher
Tulsa

We are native Oklahomans who were transplanted to Texas for 23 years by our jobs. We have moved back to a different area of Oklahoma, and it is so beautiful. Just look at Larry D. Brown's proof of this in your recent issue ("Portfolio" and back cover, May-June), which shows the photographs of Cimarron County.

Please keep showing us the beauty around us.

Fred and Betty Osbin
Kenton

Oklahoma TODAY wins writing award

The best writing in the country today is being done in regional magazines, University of Missouri School of Journalism professor Byron Scott told members of the Regional Magazine Publisher's Association at a recent meeting in Seattle.

And the best story published in a regional magazine in 1987 was published in *Oklahoma TODAY*.

"Backroads and Blue Highways," written by Ralph Marsh of Heavener, and published in the September-October 1987 issue, was awarded First Place in the Best Feature Article competition. Marsh wrote about the land and people

in southeastern Oklahoma.

Scott, a judge for this year's contest, told RPA members from 33 magazines that Marsh's article was the finest piece he had read in years. Articles entered by *Yankee* and *Washington* magazines placed second and third.

Oklahoma TODAY also won, for the third year in a row, the first runner-up award for Best Travel Magazine in a national competition sponsored by the Society of American Travel Writers. Judges in that contest evaluated 806 entries from 169 individuals and publications. *Oklahoma TODAY*, they said, "is outstanding from cover to cover."

Joe

By Kathryn Jenson White

Housing starts may be down in most of Oklahoma, but in Muskogee one builder has about three years of construction ahead of him completing the homes he has promised to craft for others, as well as those he longs to do just to satisfy his own love of design and problem solving.

Joe Farmer's houses are quite a bit shorter than the average ranch-style, but they often involve much taller orders of creativity, craftsmanship and time.

"Ten of my 11 dollhouses I've built since I retired 11 years ago," he says. "Some take only two or three months; some longer. It took me eight months on the latest French Quarter house, working when I want to. I don't have anything crowding me. I've had four heart attacks, so I'm not an eight-to-fiver anymore. If I want to go to the coffee joint, I close up shop and go. If I run into something I'm bored with, I just quit for a while."

To avoid too much boredom, Joe has created a wide variety of house styles, including several variations on antebellum mansions, two New Orleans French Quarter houses, a modern solar home, a Baltimore townhouse and a three-story replica of a 1920 German dollhouse that cleverly doubles as a Christmas tree base each December.

He has also reproduced the historical Clayton House in Fort Smith, Arkansas. That lovely replica, which is 4 feet tall, 5 feet wide and 4 feet deep, came complete with ornate gingerbread and a rolling base covered with artificial turf. The house was pur-



Joe's French Quarter replica has a crystal chandelier and electricity to each room.

chased by a family from New Jersey.

One of Joe's three daughters is the proud owner of his first effort, which he put together for her Christmas present in 1943.

"It's sitting in the front hallway of her house. I made it from orange crates and apple boxes, and it was small. Couldn't have been too fancy, either, since all I had was a pocket knife, a keyhole saw and a hammer. That kind of limits you," Joe says.

Today, Joe's one-man building operation has many more sophisticated tools than that, several of which the builder has built himself.

Joe, who is 75, prepared for his current hobby-that's-almost-a-second-ca-

reer for about 40 years in his positions of lineman, installer, repairman and central office maintenance man at Southwestern Bell and in an earlier stint as equipment and building maintenance man for a grocery operation.

"I've piddled around with just about everything," Joe says. "I made my own toys when I was a kid. Wagons and cars, you know. Wood always interested me the most. I grew up with it. Might have been inbred from my grandfather, since he and most of my dad's brothers were carpenters."

Joe's wonderful wood creations all have one primary goal: to provide children with a setting in which their fantasy selves can romp freely without the

distractions of being careful not to touch this or move that.

"I want to make it completely playable for a child; my houses are built to be used," he says with conviction. "I can stand on my French Quarter house if I want to; it's solid, made of half-inch plywood in the walls and floors. I'd rather make my light fixtures than buy them, too. Mine will stand up longer. You can't hit those bought lights; you'll tear them up. The front porch lantern on my French Quarter house is made of three-quarter-inch copper tubing.

"My houses have one-quarter-inch glass windows rather than the thin, plastic sheet in kits. I won't bother with a kit. I've had the opportunity to take over some that folks started, but I won't touch 'em. Most of them have finished part of the house without the detail work and I can't reach in there to finish it. I complete mine a floor at a time.

"Also, kit houses are fragile. They don't last very long. If one of my houses is properly taken care of, it will go through generations. There's not a dollhouse in this book I've got that will match my craftsmanship. I'm braggin' I guess, but it's true."

The detail and intricacy of Joe's work please the collector and miniature lover as well as the child; he plans for the latter to become the former as he creates.

"I size all my houses to work with antique replica furniture," Joe says. "I aim for that because as a child gets older, into their teens, they'll want the house but want to refurnish it as a showpiece. They'll buy the antique replica furniture for it then."

Joe is careful about authenticity and artistic touches as well as durability and long-term value for his homeowners. He draws no plans, visualizing the completed house in his mind and then making that vision a reality by careful craftsmanship. He works from pictures, those he takes on vacation while scouting for possible houses to replicate, those sent by friends or those he

finds in books and magazines. Often his houses are combinations of parts from several homes of similar architectural style.

The one exception to date to the no-plans approach is a house Joe built for a couple in Turner Falls.

"They bought this set of house plans out of Pennsylvania to build a

Joe's wood creations have one primary goal: to allow children's fantasy selves to romp freely without being careful not to touch this or move that.

house from," he explains. "They couldn't tell anything about it from the plans, though, so they asked me if I could build them a dollhouse so they could see what it would really look like. They like it so much, they're going to build it down there. It was a solar-type house all in natural woods, a pretty little thing."

That house has a garage door that goes up and down, so Joe and Ida, his wife of more than 50 years, scouted out a Corvette to sit in it as a perfect finishing touch. Ida, an artist and florist, helps Joe with the decorating and completion work on the houses. He makes aluminum window boxes; she arranges the miniature silk flowers in them. He carves out the brick pattern for the walls of his homes; she paints them.

The way the brickmaking process has developed is a good example of the way Joe delights in creating design and construction problems for himself, then figuring out ways to solve them.

"You experiment," he says. "You say, 'There's got to be an easier way.' For the bricks, I paint the whole wall white and rub the paint into the joints.

Then, I made Ida this paint roller out of a sponge hair curler. A quarter-inch dowel just fits into the hole in it. I drilled a hole in the ends of the dowel and fixed a coat hanger handle. We just put a little of the paint in a dish and roll it on over the top. If you don't pressure it, you won't go into the joints at all."

Joe has also designed wooden spiral staircases, metal circular staircases, stained glass windows, bay windows with roofs that come off so children can play with their dolls in the bay area, simulated decorative wrought iron railings and cleverly hinged walls so that a house may be completely closed up when not in use and opened for play or display from front and/or back when the owner desires.

"My next one is going to have a turret top on it," he says thoughtfully. "I've got it about halfway figured out. J.C. Oliver, who helps me with the windows, is going to make a curved window that will swing open so the children can reach in there and play. It will be curved, leaded, clear glass and will sit right in the wall."

Joe can't imagine not spending his time figuring things out. "I'd go stark raving mad without my projects," he says. "That ol' one-eyed monster in there would beat you to death if you didn't have work to do."

When Joe does relax, it's in a room he built on to his house and named "Zeke's Caboose." The story behind the name tells a lot about Joe's sense of humor and the love of tradition and durability to be found in all his dollhouses.

"I call it my old man's mad room," he says. "My dad's name was Zeke, and they called him Zeke. He was a railroad man, and there's no more Farmers in our line. I'm the last of them; I'm Zeke's Caboose." □

Have a nominee for "Uncommon Common Folk"? Write to Kathryn clo Oklahoma TODAY, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.



McGehee Catfish Restaurant

By Barbara Palmer

Rudy McGehee is in the third generation to live on a Love County farm overlooking the Red River, a pastoral spread dappled with stands of 100-year-old pecan trees. When Rudy decided to open a catfish restaurant 16 years ago, he didn't see any reason to leave.

To reach McGehee Catfish Restaurant, would-be diners must make a zagging four-and-a-half mile drive that demands faith in widely spaced signs. When customers arrive, Rudy and his wife, Enid, try to make sure they're glad they came.

Rudy got into the catfish business when marbled beef was king, and the

kindest thing anybody had to say about fish was that it was "brain food." Rudy was looking for a way to supplement his farming income and catfish, he says, "were interesting."

Rudy developed first one, and then a string of catfish ponds, and opened a "fish-out" operation where local fishermen came to hook his cereal-fed fish.

ALLEN RUSSELL



At their restaurant overlooking the Red River valley, Rudy and Enid McGehee serve over 300 lbs. of fried catfish every day, plus mountains of french fries, coleslaw, hush puppies and relish. Their secret to success, Rudy says, is top-quality fish and his mother's recipes.

But catfish are smart, Rudy says, and they stopped biting.

When Rudy got the idea to open a family-style restaurant to sell his surplus fish, no one was very encouraging, not even Enid. "'If we don't make a go of this it will be a very expensive hay barn,'" Rudy remembers Enid telling him as they started construction.

As it happened, the restaurant was a resounding success. Eight months after they opened for business, the McGehees added another dining room, but they have hardly changed anything else, except to keep serving more and more fish.

The McGehee catfish dinner is served family-style: a rounded platter of fried catfish steaks and fillets and french fries, bowls of spicy, shredded cole slaw, authentically lumpy hush puppies, plates of sliced onions and lemon wedges and bowls of green-to-mato relish.

Waiters leave diners tactfully alone for awhile, and reappear, offering to bring more fish, more slaw, more fries, more of everything.

The restaurant serves unlimited quantities, because "that's the way I like to eat," Rudy says. "Don't you? We try to be friendly."

If customers want to eat a lot of Rudy's fish, he says that's his least worry. "It all evens out."

The McGehees say they don't have time to notice when a patron sets a new record for fish consumption, but sometimes it's painfully obvious.

"We have some go out of here, and they're just a-hurtin'," Rudy says.

The menu also offers steaks, a legacy from the early years of the restaurant. Even then, steaks were mostly for the convenience of Northerners.

Yankees, Rudy says, had the notion a proper person doesn't eat catfish, which they disdained as scavenger fish feeding on the muck at the bottom of lakes and rivers. Rudy will agree that wild fish have a musky, gamey flavor, but farm-fed catfish, raised on handfuls of soy-based pellets, are a different

fish altogether. Lately, as all fish have gained luster in the minds of consumers, even Northerners are coming around, Rudy says.

Enid keeps a guest book on a stand in the main dining room, its function seemingly to be to collect one superlative after another: "GREAT FISH,"

*The restaurant
serves unlimited
quantities, be-
cause "that's the
way I like to eat,"
Rudy says.
"Don't you?"*

"out-of-sight!" "Best fish in the Northern Hemisphere." So an entry flatly stating "Terrible," is an eye-catcher. Reading backwards, the rest of the entry, "Name: Madonna, Address: Hollywood," confirms the comment as a bit of teen hilarity. (Other entries written in the same style of chubby handwriting favor rating the teenaged wait staff over the food.) Even adults don't resist the chance to be cute in Enid's book. The author of an entry from Hawaii wrote: "Long drive, but worth the trip."

"Fish has been good to us," Enid says, good enough that Rudy bought an airplane to fly from the grass airstrip he installed for customers. Enid likes to travel to Europe with Rudy when she can get him away from the farm.

Despite their success, the McGehees have remained true to their unpretentious roots. Iced tea is served in red plastic glasses, and dinner comes in plastic bowls and chunky white plates.

No matter how busy the restaurant becomes, customers are always welcome to drop into the kitchen. "If we've got a line of 50 people, we'll still let them go through the kitchen," Rudy says.

"Not that it's any great thing to see," interjects Enid.

Rudy prides himself on being able to serve any customer within 15 minutes. "And we don't cook anything ahead of time either."

Rudy's method for cooking fish is the same as it was the first night they opened. There are only a few guidelines, but they're important.

McGehee's Fried Catfish

Carefully wash catfish steaks and fillets in cold water. ("That's important," Enid says. "Get them real clean.")

Salt lightly and dip into yellow cornmeal.

Fry in deep peanut oil until golden brown.

The McGehees have so much business, or are so generous, they volunteer the name of another restaurant, Cosby's Catfish Restaurant near Disney, for those unlucky enough to not make it down south. Before Ron and Sue Cosby opened the restaurant, they drove to Marietta and studied the McGehees' methods. Rudy and Enid told them all they knew—almost.

"Well, we helped them up to a point," says Rudy. "We didn't give them our recipe for hushpuppies." ☐

You'll find McGehee's by exiting I-35 at the Marietta exit and traveling west on S.H. 32. Signs will direct you to the restaurant, approximately 4.5 miles south and west of I-35.

McGehee's all-you-can-eat catfish dinner is \$8.49. A deboned child's portion is \$4.50. The restaurant is open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, and from 1 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. It is closed on Wednesdays.

For more information, call (405) 276-2751.

THE TRAIL

*The best way to see the Ouachita
Mountains is the oldest way—on foot.*

By Scott Carlberg

Photographs by
David Fitzgerald



Eventide seeps into the valleys of the Ouachita Mountains the way thick maple syrup slowly coats a stack of johnnycakes. High in the mountains, above the distant lights of Heavener and Talihina and Oklahoma's Highway 1, is a sometimes serene, sometimes rugged path from which to watch for nightfall in the forest.



The secrets of the Ouachita Trail, 225 miles of mountainous passageway from Talimena State Park to Little Rock, Arkansas, lie in its journey through the forest and in the people who built it and live along its path.

No other trails like it exist in Oklahoma; few in the country can compare to it. The trail is open to anyone, yet it is exclusive in that only those who have walked it—for one mile or 225—can say they've been there.

The fine thread of a trail weaving through the tough fabric of mountains seems all the tougher to the people who built it. A.Z. Owen was the forest supervisor for the Ouachita National Forest when trailbuilding began in 1971. Nearly 190 miles of the trail wind through federal forest lands; the rest passes through one Oklahoma state park—Talimena—and two Arkansas state parks—Queen Wilhelmina and Pinnacle Mountain. Crews of forest service employees, senior citizens and young conservation corps workers from eight districts in Arkansas and Oklahoma labored a decade before the trail was finished. They built it from old logging roads and century-old footpaths; much of the trail they carved from the land with their own hands. Forty-six miles of the trail are in Oklahoma, and those miles follow rivers, traverse steep slopes and crest the tops of mountains at altitudes of 3,000 feet.

"The inspiration for the trail," says Owen, now retired, "was to have a way to follow the Ouachitas on foot in the same direction the mountains went: east to west. It was old people mostly that built the trail, along with some young people. The people worked in crews of 10 and their big challenge was to keep the grade."

Perhaps this is the real meaning of "making the grade," which is the angle the trail slants up or down a mountainside. A tilt of less than 8 percent is ideal—enough for water to run off the trail and enough to permit a reasonable up or down hiking pace. That's not easy in the Ouachitas, and sometimes

the grade reaches 15 percent or more.

"Rocks, they were a problem!" says Owen, while he sits upon an impressive sandstone boulder skirted by the trail. "There are lots of big rocks here and we had to move many of them. Pry them out. Rake back smaller rock to make a stable trail."

"Rock glaciers" left from the Ice Age cling to a few mountainsides. Some people call them "rock rivers," and the boulders are too big for people to move. The rock masses slowly creep downslope, and the glaciers' lack of

*Forty-six miles
of the trail
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and those miles
follow rivers,
traverse steep
slopes and crest
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of mountains at
altitudes of
3,000 feet.*

vegetation creates bald spots in the otherwise lush forest.

James Means' heart is close to this trail, too. He's a forestry technician for the U.S. Forest Service and has toughened his hands on the boulders of the Ouachita Trail. "We've got pretty country here and you can't really see it just by driving through. There's nowhere else like it in Oklahoma or anywhere near here. I feel like we have something to show off. The air's pure. There's cool mountain water. And every season is special, even winter. In wintertime, there'll be white on the mountaintops, but you can hike in a light jacket down in the protection of the valleys."

Often, cool fog blankets the valleys, a fog that subdues even the noise of

the forest. The sun pierces through once, twice, then bullies away the mist to bake the mountainsides. A wool jacket morning makes way for a T-shirt afternoon. When the evening sun retreats, the air takes on an electric snap of chilly breezes.

Some days succumb to the fog. Steamrollers of clouds race toward the mountaintops, collide and moil over them, spilling freely down the other side, the way people scatter out the door of a crowded theater. These are days that hikers most appreciate arriving at camp, where a fire steams away foggy moisture from blue jeans.

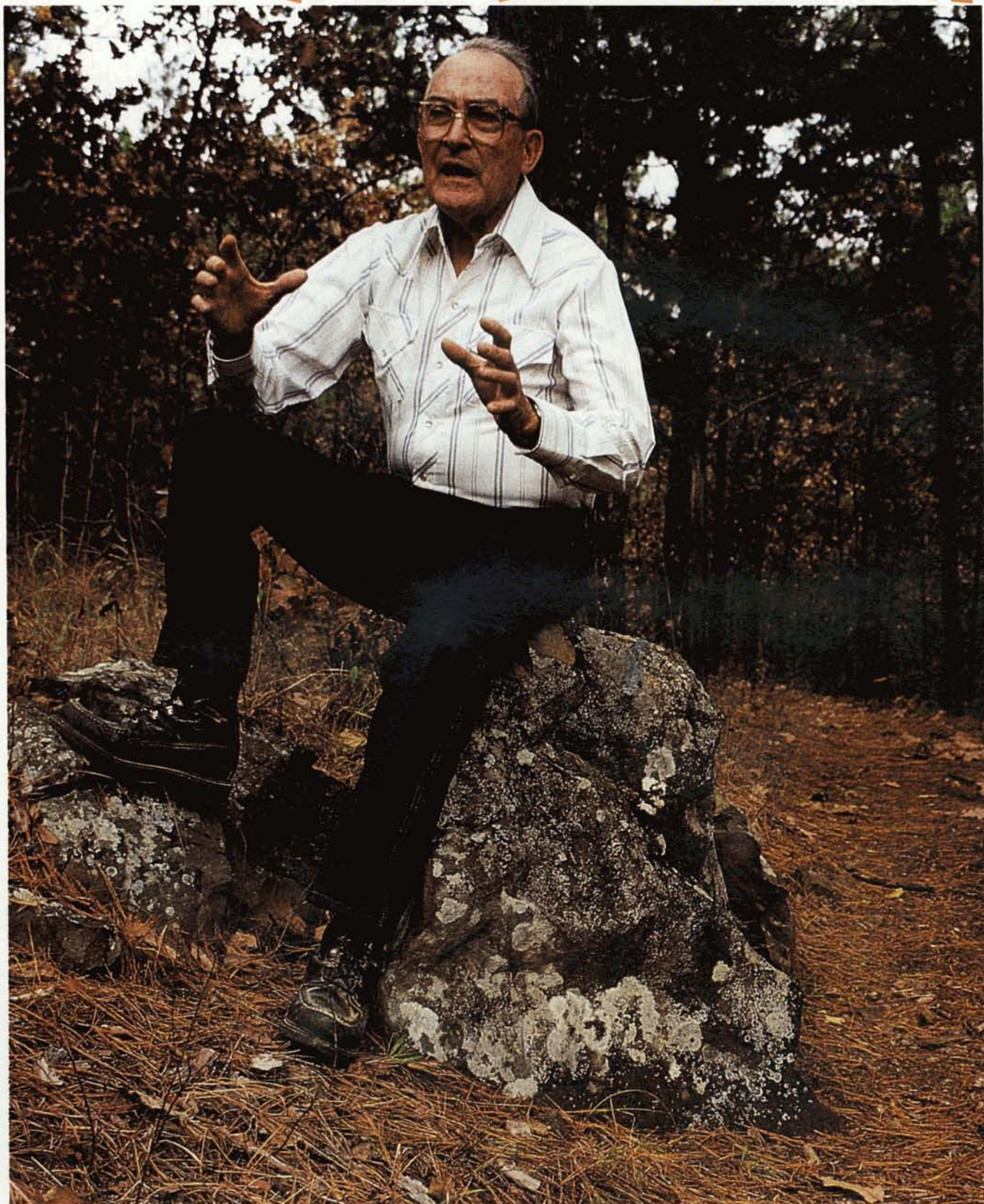
While trails have been in the Ouachitas for years—the Choctaw Indians, who came to the land in the 1830s, had trails that ran just below the crest of the hilltops so no one could see them approaching—few adventurers have taken time to savor the rewards of a long trip on the Ouachita Trail. A hiker can walk for five days and see few other people.

An autumn hiker walks in an artist's palette of colors. Across the valley, mountains of orange frost-bitten trees look like huge piles of pumpkins. Individual trees jump from the forest in an egocentric attempt to outshine their peers. Single oak leaves snap with pale yellows, reds and greens.

Even the names of the Ouachitas brim with verbal color. The waters of Pashabbe and Billy creeks feed the Kiamichi River, which flows into the Red River. Winding Stair Mountain feels to the backpacker just like endless stairways. Castle Rock, Emerald and Deadman vistas conjure images of majesty, color and treachery.

The Ouachita Trail is more than a footpath—it encompasses the people and landscape on either side. People are an important facet to the character of the mountains, and they are as rugged and keen as the land. They have a hardiness of soul—a tough, community spirit.

Gene Wilson, a Choctaw Presbyterian preacher whose circuit of a dozen tiny churches crisscrosses the Ouachita



A.Z. Owen, retired forest supervisor, oversaw trailbuilding when it began in 1971. Owen and his crews of forest service workers, senior citizens and kids labored to keep the grades gentle on mid-America's east-west trail. Says one ranger: "They made it for anyone who can walk."



The Ouachitas' spectacular scenery evolved from a geologic traffic accident that happened 200 million years ago. A collision between continents now known as South America and North America forced the edges of Arkansas and Oklahoma to fold upward to form a mountain range.

Trail, is like the mountains where he preaches: tough, with a lot to give. He wanted to be a professional boxer, but attended seminary instead so he could return to southeastern Oklahoma to give the people his rock solid faith.

"The people here are close-knit, and they have close-knit, family churches," Wilson says. "In fact, the property for the churches where I preach was given by families so we could build a place to worship. The churches are known by the family that gave the land, such as Wilson's Acres."

Once people move here, they choose to stay. A forest service ranger came to Talihina 10 years ago for a one-year assignment. He has the option to transfer, but won't.

Nolan Fox is also dedicated to the Ouachitas. For 25 years, he owned a store in Talihina. Now retired from shopkeeping, he works at the visitor information station at Oklahoma's end of the Talimena Drive. "I identify

with the mountains," Nolan says. "I love them. Some people don't. People come to the booth and say they're glad

*Rock glaciers
left from
the Ice Age cling
to a few moun-
tainsides. Some
people call them
"rock rivers,"
and the boulders
are too big
for people
to move.*

to get off the mountain. They don't like heights. But I don't think you can travel far from the mountains once

you've lived near them."

The region has been a gathering point for many people for many years, and the natural resources of the area have been the focal points. An artesian well was the modest beginning to Choctaw City, now Heavener, in 1884, when the land belonged to the Choctaw Nation. Later, homesteaders dotted the mountains wherever they could find a spring. Cabin foundations, now being reclaimed by nature, can still be seen in the hills. More people moved in for the lumber, especially when the Frisco and Kansas City railroads came to town. Access brought commerce, and cattle became a local industry. Lumber and cattle—along with tourism—are still strong economic sources.

The land has a rich history, but parts of the Ouachitas escape the clutches of the calendar, especially when Gene Wilson stands behind the oak pulpit of a white clapboard church. Simple pine

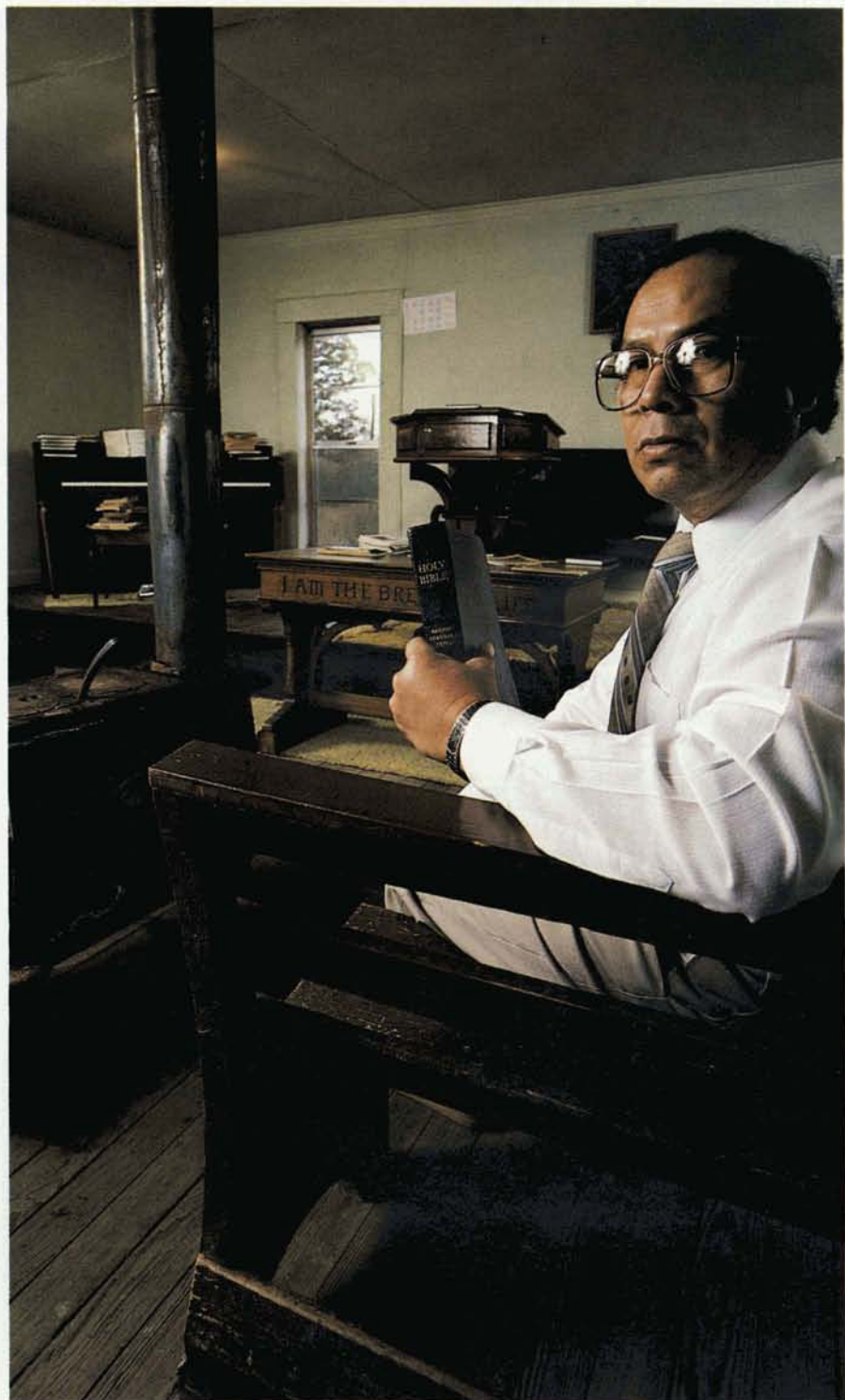
pews surround a pot-belly stove and face a picture of Jesus.

Sometimes, age is only obvious when confronted with symbols of a high-tech world. Last November,

when the chief of the U.S. Forest Service dedicated the Ouachita Trail, a Washington official drove a handsome metal medallion at "Mile 0" in Talimena State Park. The marker is a tes-

tament to the mountains and the work Oklahomans did to carve a footpath through them.

After the ceremony ended, the marker stayed with the land and became part of it. And the history remains here, too, as well as A.Z. Owen, Nolan Fox, Gene Wilson, the trail-builders and their love for the mountains. All are reasons for a pilgrimage on the Ouachita Trail. And it is a pilgrimage, indeed, a chance to become immersed in nature. And slowly, the spirit of the hills will seep into your heart the way nightfall seeps into Ouachita valleys. 



Presbyterian preacher Gene Wilson's clapboard church near Whitesboro—with its woodburning stove, oak pulpit and pine pews—is one of more than a dozen on his circuit in the Ouachitas.

Scott Carlberg lives in Bartlesville. David Fitzgerald, who is based in Oklahoma City, travels extensively on photography assignments. His third book, Israel, will be published this fall.



Getting There

The Ouachita Trail could be one of the most satisfying routes through southeastern Oklahoma. It begins in Talimena State Park, seven miles east of Tahlequah on U.S. 271, and crisscrosses mountains in the Ouachita National Forest. The trail ends in Pinnacle Mountain State Park, 15 miles west of Little Rock, Arkansas.

Although most of the trail is built on gentle grades for average hikers, short parts of the trail may have an incline of 15 or more percent.

The trail is well marked, but U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Ivan Cupp recommends hikers carry maps with them. For long-distance hikers, the trail passes near small communities, where supplies can be replenished. Cupp especially advises hikers to take water with them.

Additional information and free maps are available at Talimena State Park and the West End Visitor Information Station on Talimena Drive, a mile northeast of the park on U.S. 271, or by calling the U.S. Forest Service at (918) 567-2326.

Miss Angie

By Jean Devlin

*Angie Debo moved with her family in a covered wagon from Kansas to Marshall, Oklahoma Territory, in 1899. She was then a 9-year-old girl who loved books and learning, yet she lived in a land without a high school or library. Angie began teaching in rural schools when she was 16, although she had to wait until she was 23 to graduate from Marshall High School's first senior class. She majored in history at the University of Oklahoma, and earned a master's degree in 1924 at the University of Chicago. Angie quickly learned that the history field at major universities was "shut, locked and barred against women," but scholarly research was not. Although one avenue of opportunity was closed to her, she soared up the other. Angie became Dr. Debo at OU in 1933, when she was 43 years old, and her published dissertation, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic*, won a prestigious award deeming it the most important book in American history in 1934. Angie focused her research on Indian history and didn't fear publishing its ungraceful facts: her powerful 1940 exposé, *And Still the Waters Run*, which examined the corruption of the liquidation of the Five Civilized Tribes, was so controversial she withdrew it from the OU Press and published it at Princeton. Her publishing career continued through the 1980s, and her credits include 13 books and more than 120 articles. Throughout nine decades, with the acclaim and controversy that followed her, Angie kept her white frame home in the little town where she arrived in a covered wagon as a girl. Marshall, population 372, was big enough and good enough for the tiny woman whose fame spread worldwide.*

When Dr. Angie Debo died on Feb. 21, 1988, Ramona O'Neill cried.

This normally stoic Oklahoma farm wife didn't cry because the nation had lost one of its finest historians, which it had. Nor did she mourn because Oklahoma had lost a woman who knew its most sordid secrets and loved it still, though that was true, too.

Ramona O'Neill cried that Sunday morning for the same reason the memory of Angie Debo lingers with many Oklahomans: An extraordinary woman was gone.

"My first thought when I heard she had died was that there would be no one left to tell me, 'Oh, Ramona, how beautiful you look.'

"I miss her so," said Ramona O'Neill, wiping away tears as she sat in her kitchen in a cottage just a stone's throw away from the white house in

Marshall where Angie Debo had lived as a girl and again as a woman.

With all the attention that has been

books on Oklahoma, the plans for an Angie Debo room in the Edmon Low Library in Stillwater—it's easy for the world to forget that behind the historian was simply a woman.

Marshall, Oklahoma, doesn't have that problem.

"To the people of Marshall," explained Hugh O'Neill, who had known Angie Debo since he was a boy shuffling past her house on his way to school, "she lived here. She was a good soul. And, yes, she was a writer."

Miss Angie, the townspeople called her. They gave her the name as much out of affection because she taught their children, attended their churches and secretly helped

when their pensions fell short as for any awe in which they held her scholarly achievements.

"In Marshall, she's just Angie Debo," said Hugh O'Neill, quoting one of the town sons. "You get away



Charles Banks Wilson's portrait of Angie Debo hangs in the Capitol.

lavished on Angie Debo in the last few years—the filming of a PBS documentary on her life, the American Historical Association award for her definitive research on the American Indian, the portrait in the state Capitol for her

from Marshall, and she's a celebrity."

That's one of the reasons Angie Debo lived in Marshall.

There she could putter in the garden behind the white, single-story frame house her family had lived in for most of a century. There she could tend to her roses, including the American Beauty climber that she was so proud of.

In Marshall she didn't have to worry about "Dr. Debo" being embarrassed should someone spot her in her nightgown and robe impetuously driving to the edge of town in hopes of catching sight of a midnight comet.

There she had the quiet she needed to write.

And that's how her neighbors recall Angie Debo—a brilliant historian, yes, but also a woman who for years started each day in the middle of her yard, armed with a butcher knife, determined to extract every dandelion on her corner lot.

The same dogged determination she leveled at those tiny, yellow weeds, said Hugh O'Neill, surfaced in her work, where her hallmarks were her attention to detail, her thoroughness.

"I remember an old historic marker outside Mulhall," he recalled, "that read 'Mulhall, Oklahoma Territory.'"

Angie Debo always thought that marker should be corrected. "It wasn't Oklahoma Territory then, not until 1890," Hugh O'Neill explained, "and that sign always bothered Angie. That's how meticulous she was."

When it came time to erect an historic marker to commemorate Marshall's birth, Angie Debo made sure the slab of rock read: Marshall, Indian Territory.

Truth gave her the greatest pleasure.

"Angie never cared about money or fame," said Ramond Bryson, a retired farmer who spends his days now seeing to it that the scraps of paper that constitute his friend's will are followed to the letter. "She wasn't concerned about writing books. She was committed to telling the truth."

On the sofa in his office, in the sprawling home just west of Marshall where Angie Debo often took her holiday meals, his wife stirred. "Angie never tried to impress you, she never sought to get fame," said Mabel Bryson. "She would not dress better than everybody else, nor eat better, and secretly she helped people."

Angie Debo's quiet benevolence was possible not because her writing and research had made her wealthy—they hadn't—but because she cared so little about the trappings of life that she always had extra to share.

"Her style of living was very simple and plain," recalled Ramona O'Neill. "She was never the kind to wear flashy jewelry."

The only baubles Angie Debo collected during her 98 years on earth were a few pieces of turquoise jewelry made by the Indians she loved to write about and a strand of amber beads bought on a trip to Moscow.

Martha Sandlin, who was chosen to orchestrate the upcoming PBS documentary, "Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo," in part because its subject insisted on an Oklahoma director, noticed Miss Angie's gentle way with the people in Marshall.

"She remembered the status of their crops and their animals, and when they came to visit she would ask about them," marveled Martha Sandlin, who though raised in Holdenville, now lives in Brooklyn, New York.

During the five years she spent working on the documentary, Sandlin became convinced that "Angie Debo was really a 19th-century woman ... Her real affection was for local people, which was interesting because she was one of the state's only vocal critics."

Most of all, however, the film director recalled being bowled over by Angie Debo's "girlish pleasure of simple things, like wildflowers."

For Ramona O'Neill, too, Angie Debo was special as much for her neighborly gestures and her almost childlike fascination with birds and sunsets as for her savvy opinions on

politics, history or social issues.

Her friends relished her dismissal of Richard Nixon as "the only evil person who ever occupied the White House" and shared her dislike of the slang in the third edition of Webster's International Dictionary, but they also cherished her for the date nut bread she made fresh in her kitchen and the way she would pad down the sidewalk when she had a book to share.

The folks of Marshall returned the affection Angie Debo gave them, but that didn't always mean they understood her. The women never believed her when at the age of 98 she was still telling them she couldn't take their calls between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. because she was working, said Mabel Bryson, and the men could never quite comprehend why she was a member of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Still, they loved her. And when old age made it impossible for her to live alone, five Marshall women came forward to work round the clock so that Miss Angie could stay in the home she loved.

Angie Debo died with few regrets, her friends said. She didn't lament the husband and children she never had because it was always her choice to have her work instead. She loved children, said Ramona O'Neill, and Angie Debo let it be known that her door was open if a local child had a question, needed tutoring or just wanted to know a little more about something.

Much of her effort to tell the truth about Oklahoma's history was done with children in mind and with a belief in their right to look at the world and issues with the clarity that comes from having the naked truth.

"My one goal," Angie Debo always said, "was to discover the truth and publish it." □

"Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo" will be aired during October on OETA.

Jean Devlin is the lifestyle and arts editor for the Stillwater NewsPress.

FLYING HIGH



*Bolstered by oil money and steady nerves,
a generation of Oklahoma pilots soared.*

By Barbara Palmer

WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTIONS, OU LIBRARY



Army pilots turned barnstormers gave many Oklahomans, like Amy Taylor shown flying in 1918, their first taste of air travel. Citizens denounced the barnstormers' perilous stunts—wing-walking, leaping from plane to plane—but they came out by the hundreds to watch.

Like Icarus and a thousand experimenters before him, Arthur Oakley started out long on desire, but short on technology.

As a boy growing up in Indian Territory, Oakley dreamed of flying. First, he strapped homemade wings on his bicycle and pedaled like fury down the street, hoping to pick up enough air speed to ascend.

When that failed, Oakley enlisted gravity. He rounded up the neighborhood spectators and they climbed with the bicycle up the side of a small mountain. With a shove from the top of a 40-foot bluff, Oakley made his first flight.

Oakley hadn't given much thought as to how he would control the winged bicycle once it was aloft, he recalled in a 1956 interview more than 50 years later. "I thought I would just lean this way and then the other when it was necessary."

In his disappointingly brief journey, Oakley wasn't badly injured, but his bicycle was a twisted ruin.

"That flight lacked a lot from being successful," Oakley ruminated.

Led by men like Arthur Oakley, who failed and kept trying, Oklahoma bumped, crashed and skidded its way into aviation in the early part of the century.

In just a few years, Oklahomans would help push the way into the space age, shattering speed and distance records. To do it, Oklahoma aviators leaned heavily on two of the state's most abundant natural resources: oil and hardheadedness.



After Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first successful sustained flight in North Carolina in 1903, news traveled slowly.

In 1911, eight years after the Wright brothers' flight, only a dozen firms were manufacturing airplanes in the United States. Hundreds of mechanics and inventors, though, were designing

and building planes in backyard shops.

One of the first Oklahoma-built airplanes, *The Albatross*, a monoplane powered by a 10 h.p. motorcycle engine, was designed by W.S. Blackburn and built in a Chickasha bicycle shop. Blackburn proudly put the airplane on

*Oklahomans
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*To do it, they
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hardheadedness.*

display, charging 25 cents for adults and 10 cents for children, but found there were few spectators. A resident grumbled in a local newspaper, "If a stranger had brought that same machine here from New York or Paris and placed it on exhibition, it would have required a dozen or so policemen to keep the crowds from stampeding it. I can't understand why the people of Chickasha are uninterested in this product."

Blackburn leased his plane to an out-of-state pilot, Lestere Miller, who tested the craft briefly, then loaded it onto a train bound for San Antonio.

That same year, Clyde Cessna began to build and fly an airplane out in western Oklahoma on the Great Salt Plains. Cessna had a local reputation as a mechanical genius and worked in Oklahoma as a threshing machine operator, an automobile salesman and as a prospector. After he saw a flying circus in Oklahoma City, Cessna moved to New York to work in an aircraft factory in the Bronx. Two months later, he was back in the state, a short, rumped visionary, designing and testing airplanes.

Cessna looked in Enid for investors to help him build and finance his planes, but couldn't find anyone who was interested. Cessna moved to Wichita, taking with him the future Cessna Aircraft Company.

Cessna later told a fellow pilot that folks in Enid were interested in his plane—until he began to ask for money, said Keith Tolman, who is researching the history of Oklahoma aviation.

"Aviators were heroes to the public," Tolman said, but their seemingly flimsy planes didn't look like the wave of the future.

The constant danger of cracking up in the experimental planes gave the early "birdmen" a mythical, eccentric status, Tolman said. Oklahomans flocked to see exhibition fliers like Cal Rodgers, who stopped in Oklahoma in 1911 on his way across the country (in 49 days with 39 crashes).

"They were amusing, but their planes weren't of much practical value," Tolman said.



Code Flag Cards from the early '40s.

TED WEST AIR SPACE MUSEUM



Soaring over the Great Salt Plains in 1911, Clyde Cessna attracted interest in his flying machines—until he began to ask for money.

When the United States entered the war, it lagged far behind Germany, France and England in airplane technology and production. The federal government concentrated most of its effort and money into building trainer airplanes, mostly Curtiss-designed JN-4s, nicknamed “Jennies.” The trainers had 90 h.p. engines, wooden frames and linen-covered wings. Joe Bartles, an oilman and the son of the man for whom Bartlesville is named, founded an airplane company in Dewey licensed to build the planes.

In the early months of the war, military strategists argued that the best use of airplanes would be to photograph enemy troops and to make maps.

The bonds between pilots, even those fighting against each other, were strong at first. Soldiers flying back and forth behind enemy lines waved to one another from their cockpits. As the war intensified, pilots began to carry pistols and rifles to shoot at one another.

Only one Oklahoman, William Thomas Ponder of Mangum, became a flying ace during the war, shooting down more than five enemy airplanes. Ponder enlisted in the French Army in 1916 and transferred to the U.S. Army in 1918.

The Army’s first air commander, Lt.

Benjamin Foulois, was stationed at Post Field where he commanded six Jennies. Under orders, Foulois had taught himself to fly a Wright biplane using a correspondence course from the Wrights. A school training pilots for observation planes and balloons was formed at Fort Sill’s Post Field in 1917.

Army flight instruction, even in the early 1920s, was “pretty meager,” said Jimmy Mattern, a pilot who lived in Oklahoma and Texas and competed with Wiley Post in the 1930s. “If you made it, you were a pilot. If you didn’t make it, you were dead.”

After the war, thousands of biplanes manufactured for training pilots were sold as surplus, equipping a generation of barnstormers. Young pilots pooled their money for a share in a Jenny, and hopped from town to town, wing-walking, ferrying breathless passengers and parachute jumping.

Before the war the average price of an airplane was \$7,500. War surplus planes sold for a few hundred dollars. Joe Bartles’ Dewey airplane plant folded almost immediately.

A post-war depression made the uncertain life of itinerant flying look good to many Oklahomans. “Choosing between coal mining and flying was

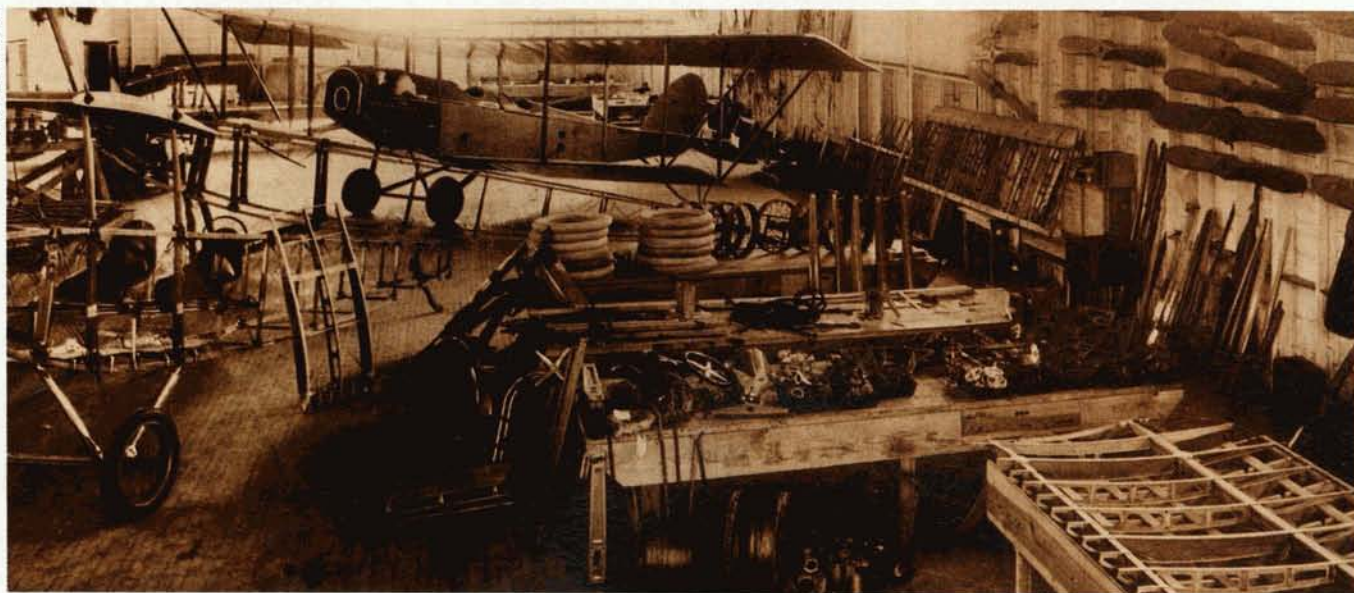
easy,” an early pilot said.

Even pilots who had other jobs liked the barnstorming life. After he left the Army Air Corps, World War I flier Clarence Page took a job in Okmulgee, selling fire-proof safes in oil fields. While he was out calling on customers during the week, Page was also looking for towns of a certain size, small enough so that flying would attract attention, but big enough to provide long lines of customers.

On Saturdays Page returned with friends and found a level cow pasture owned by a farmer willing to trade an airplane ride for the use of the field for an afternoon.

Page and his friends kept their dignity while promoting themselves. Their method for attracting business was to buzz over the town and then go for lunch at a local hamburger stand wearing the full regalia of airmen—goggles, helmets and heavy jackets. They depended on the fly-over, combined with their dashing appearance, to bring customers to them.

Page and his friends shunned stunt flying; “It scared the horses.” Instead, they sold turns around town, \$5 per person. This brand of barnstorming, while level-headed, wasn’t particularly profitable. They generally earned just



A Dewey factory built WW I trainers of wood, wire and cloth. For the war effort, automakers contributed a brand-new idea—the assembly line.

enough money to pay for gas, repairs and hamburgers. In the air, grit and sand flew continually in the pilots' faces and flying was cold and noisy. The engine oil that flew up onto the wings had to continually be wiped away with rags.

Page, now 91, made millions after World War II selling reconditioned airplane engines and founded the Air Space Museum in Oklahoma City. Barnstorming, he said, was the most fun he'd ever had in his life.

Arthur Oakley, on the other hand, was a true stunt pilot, and some said, a damned fool. Oakley learned to fly during World War I and became a master airplane mechanic in Minnesota. In 1919, he returned to Ardmore and built an airplane out of surplus parts. Oakley and a partner, Dorsey Askew, began traveling throughout Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and New Mexico, flying for exhibitions.

In one of Oakley's best-remembered stunts, he climbed on top of a moving passenger train and did a handstand. As the train chugged along, Askew piloted the plane overhead, dangling a rope ladder. Oakley caught the ladder and climbed up into the cockpit of the plane. However, such audacious stunts didn't always go

smoothly, Oakley recalled.

One time when Askew flew overhead, planning to pluck Oakley from a racing automobile, Askew miscalculated, struck the back of the car and crashed the plane. By the time Oakley got out of the car and raced to the plane, Askew had propped his straw boater on the back of his head and stretched his legs out over the airplane cockpit as calmly as if he were watching a game of checkers.

Oakley had a gift for showy touches, like flying with a pet monkey who rode on the airplane struts and peered over the propeller. A good manager, he said, cooked up banner headlines promising "Death Rides with Oakley." Implied disaster was an important ingredient in successful exhibitions. "If you don't promise to kill somebody people won't come out to see it."

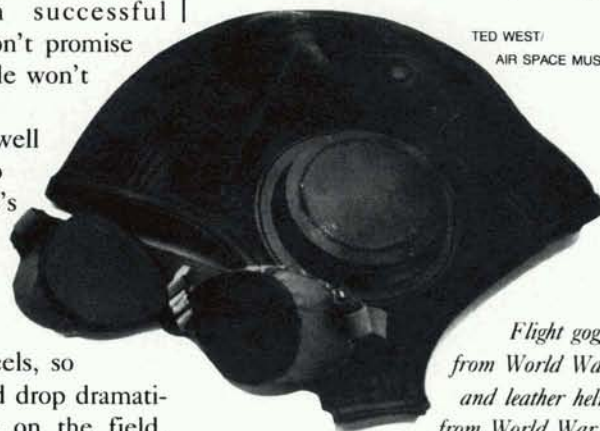
If things went too well and death began to slip into the back of people's minds, Oakley had a proven trick to regain their attention: He loosened the nuts on one of the plane's wheels, so that on takeoff it would drop dramatically, bouncing crazily on the field.

The crowd's renewed interest was rewarded when the plane came in, spinning into a cloud of dust.

After a while, the barnstorming life failed to sustain most pilots, financially or otherwise. "It got to be just one more thing," said Oakley.

Slowly, the barnstormers began to settle down. Oakley got married and retired from stunting. Some barnstormers went West and found work in Los Angeles, flying in motion pictures. Some got jobs flying for oil companies. Some, like Jimmy Mattern, flew in Hollywood for awhile and then came back to jobs flying in the oil fields.

Oakley's train stunt became a part of a film, *Go and Get it*, but he turned down offers to move to Hollywood per-



TED WEST/
AIR SPACE MUSEUM

*Flight goggles
from World War I
and leather helmet
from World War II.*

manently. "He didn't think he could tolerate living in a city," said his wife, Mahota Nichols Oakley.

Oakley settled in Ardmore, flying planes out of a wooden hanger north of town. Most airports were mom-and-pop operations, which like Oakley's, offered flying services, repairs and maintenance and flying lessons.

One of Oakley's students was a farm boy named Wiley Post. "Quickest pupil I ever had."

In the 1920s rural airstrips were lightly established on the landscape. Planes landed on grassy fields choked with wildflowers and risked tangling with windmills on takeoff. Weather forecasting was sketchy at best. "You'd stick your head out the door, and if it looked kind of good, you'd go on," Oakley said.

Planes had few navigational instruments, and pilots flew using road maps given out by gas stations, or by the "iron compass," railroad tracks.

Pilots jokingly referred to an Oklahoma City airport at Southwest 59th and Shields as the first "lighted" airport in the state. Night landings took advantage of headlights of the Interurban Trolley as it traveled between Norman and Oklahoma City.

Oakley soon realized "aviation wasn't a one-man deal." When Lloyd Noble, an Ardmore oilman, offered Oakley a job as his pilot, Oakley joyfully accepted it.

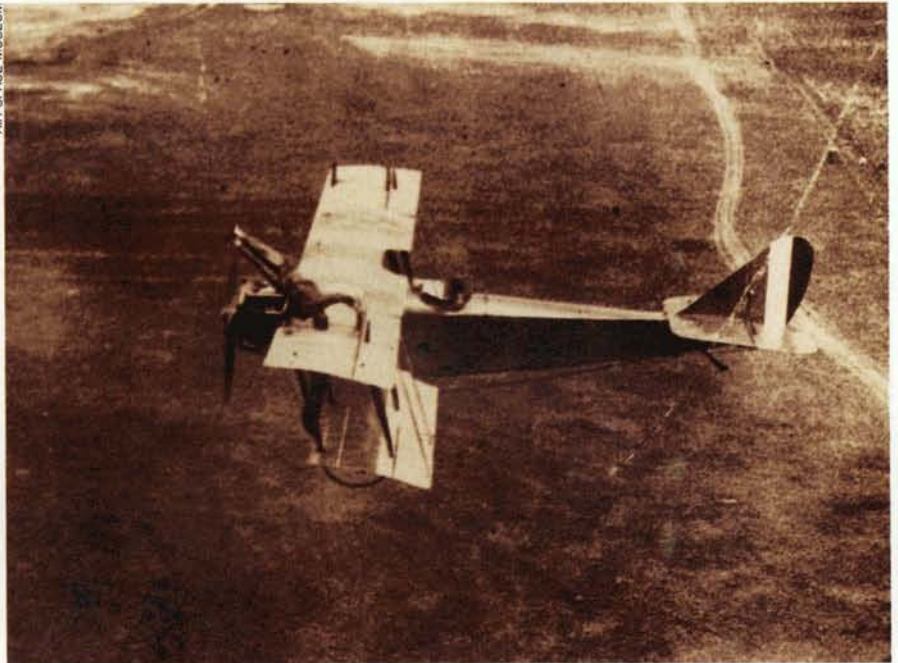
In the oil business, aviators found a way to fly and get regular pay, and in aviation, oilmen found a way to solve some of their problems and present a flashy image as well.

Traveling by air was still considered risky, but oilmen liked risks. In the 1920s, air travel was the province of movie stars and celebrities, company which oilmen found gratifying to their egos.

The bottom line, however, was that in good times oil companies could more than recoup their investments in pilots and airplanes.

Airplanes flew critical parts into remote drilling sites that were all but

AIR SPACE MUSEUM



Everyone had a lot to learn about aviation in the 1920s, including the military. Here, a soldier identified as Sergeant Wells practices wingwalking at Fort Sill in 1922.

unreachable after spring rains. Airplanes also gave businesses an edge over the competition. F.C. Hall, the oilman who employed Wiley Post and staked his first record-setting flight around the world, reportedly hired Post after he lost a deal to a faster, airborne competitor.

In 1927, after Charles Lindbergh, a former airmail pilot, made the first solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris, "the world went nuts over aviation," Tolman said. Air travel boomed. In 1929 there were 2,678 pilots in the United States. By 1931 that number had jumped to 15,208.

More aviators were competing to fly farther and faster. Businessmen who took note of the immense publicity of Lindbergh's flight were eager to help them. In Oklahoma, oilmen who already had pilots on their payrolls were doubly eager to support aviation, said Tolman. They saw a new market for aviation fuel developing right before their eyes.

In 1927, James Dole, the Hawaii pineapple tycoon, offered \$35,000 to the first and second pilots to cross the Pacific Ocean from North America to

Honolulu. To promote a newly developed aviation gasoline, "Nu-Aviation," Frank Phillips sponsored two Oklahoma flying teams in the Dole Race, both flying Beech Travelair planes. Bennett Griffin and Al Henley, in *The Oklahoma*, turned back early in the race when their engine overheated. But *The Woolaroc*, piloted by Art Goebel and Bill Davis, won the race.

Phillips' victory was marred, however, when 10 people died, either during the race or afterwards, searching for downed planes. It was rumored, too, that Goebel had secretly switched out the Phillips' gasoline the night before, because he didn't trust the product, although the rumor was never substantiated, Tolman said.

The next year, Erle Halliburton, the founder of an oil field services company, sponsored *The Tester* in a transcontinental air race. Oklahoma pilot Bob Cantwell flew Halliburton, his brother John and a horned toad mascot to victory in nine hours and 11 minutes.

In Tulsa that year the Skelly Oil Company bought out the Mid-Continent Aircraft Company and began to produce airplanes and parts. In the ear-

ly 1930s, a husband and wife team, Jimmy and Mae Haizlip, were famed instructors for the Spartan School of Aeronautics, a subsidiary of Skelly Oil. The Haizlips both set new speed records in the National Air Races.

In 1931, flying a plane provided by Hall, Wiley Post and Harold Gatty shattered the standing record for traveling around the world: eight days, 15 hours and 51 minutes.

Back in Ardmore, Oakley told the local newspapers that he was proud of Post, but wished Post "would cut it out," fearing that he would be killed. Ironically, Oakley, the former stunt pilot, later had the reputation as a safety fanatic.

The next year, Oklahoma pilot Bennett Griffin and Jimmy Mattern set out to topple the Post-Gatty record. Mattern and Griffin were both broke and unemployed, but Mattern owned a Lockheed-Vega airplane, given to him by a Texas oilman in lieu of back wages.

Clarence Page helped promote the flight by creating a prospectus outlining the publicity and endorsements that could be reaped. It was written, Mattern said, "in lingo those oil men can understand." In New York, Page also agreed to sell the story to an agent for Universal News Services. Their schedule of fees included a \$2,500 bonus for being reported missing. Mattern and Griffin set out in *The Century of Progress* on July 4, 1932.

Boosted by a tail wind from a storm following them across the Atlantic, Mattern and Griffin reached Berlin in record time. After a nap, they took off again but were forced down when their cabin hatch blew off and damaged the tail. Mattern landed the plane in what looked like an Oklahoma wheatfield, but turned out to be a Russian peat bog. Once the plane stopped rolling forward, its wheels began to sink and the plane nosed over. The plane was damaged beyond repair, and Mattern and Griffin sold it to the Russian government for \$15,000—which they never got.

They did get their bonus, Page said, but missed out on about \$25,000 in prize money and endorsements.

That same year, on a decidedly smaller scale, Tom Allen, a mechanic and pilot from Oklahoma City, and pilot J. Herbert Banning from Los Angeles, raced to become the first black pilots to cross the United States.

As a boy, Allen rode his bicycle to Bob Tarbuton's northeast Oklahoma City airfield nearly every day. Allen didn't have the money for flying lessons, but he and Tarbuton worked out a trade. Allen worked eight hours a day with the mechanics, and Tarbuton taught Allen to fly "20 minutes at a time." Allen also threw his saxophone in on the deal.

In 1929, Allen traveled to Los Angeles to take a job as a mechanic for a black flying club. A week after he arrived, the stock market crashed and Allen was out of work.

Allen found a job blowing glass for milk bottles at Lockheed Aircraft Company and he began to save money to buy a plane.

Allen kept in touch with members of the flying club, and together the pilots built an airplane out of salvaged parts. The club's members had a difficult time keeping the airplane in flying condition, Allen said, because when members squabbled, the variously owned parts of the



Arthur Oakley, Ardmore's legendary stunt pilot, had an impeccable flying record.

plane would disappear.

Allen read a story about a New York newspaper offering \$1,000 to the first black pilot to fly cross-country. Allen and Banning bought all the parts so the airplane belonged wholly to them, and on September 19, 1932, with \$25 and a tank of gas, they left Los Angeles for New York.

The pair were dead broke by the time they reached Tucson, Allen remembered. Figuring they were too close to home to wire back to friends for more money, Allen pawned an extra suit of clothes. That money got them to El Paso. Allen and Banning crossed Texas, passing the hat wherev-



Clock from the 1932 Mattern-Griffin flight.

TED WEST
AIR SPACE MUSEUM



Jimmy Mattern, left, and Bennett Griffin crashed in Russia trying to best Wiley Post.

er they landed, raising enough cash to buy gas to hop over to the next town.

In Oklahoma, W.G. Skelly read about the trip and authorized airport managers across the Midwest to supply the pilots with gasoline, oil and repairs and to send the bills to him.

The pair were slowed down in Pittsburgh, where they bought parts at a salvage yard for the 15-year-old plane. They traveled the last leg to New York with relative ease; in exchange for money for gas and groceries, the pair dropped campaign leaflets for a Democratic presidential candidate, Franklin Roosevelt.

Banning and Allen flew into New York victoriously, and attended a jubilant celebration in Harlem the night they arrived. The next morning, Banning and Allen went down to the newspaper office to collect their prize money. Bad times had gotten there before them.

"We're sorry to inform you the man offering the prize skipped town a few days ago," the editor told Allen.

Allen and Banning returned dejectedly to California. The next February Banning was killed as a passenger in a West Coast flight. Allen lost the heart to fly for a time and took a job as a mechanic in an aircraft company. He worked for aircraft companies on the West Coast for the next three decades and returned to Oklahoma in the 1960s. Today, Allen works at the Air Space Museum in Oklahoma City, alongside newspaper photographs depicting his 1932 flight.

In Oklahoma in the 1930s, the Depression and other changes were clouding the opportunities of many self-made pilots.

Oil companies no longer had the funds to sponsor air races and attempts at record-setting flights. Federal bureaucrats were laboring to fully regulate the industry. As roads and telephone lines connected even the most rural areas, few unlicensed pilots and planes escaped notice.

Heinie Bomhoff, a Calumet wheat farmer who taught himself to fly in a

homemade plane, finally lost his long-running battle to license his plane. Young regulators angered Arthur Oakley by requiring him to teach aerial maneuvers they themselves couldn't demonstrate.

In 1935, when Wiley Post and Will Rogers died in a crash off Point Barrow in Alaska, it signaled the end of an era. The days when a poor farm boy could fly out of nowhere and astonish the world were drawing to a close.

In the future, private companies could no longer afford to build planes that could compete with high-performance military planes. Oklahoma aviators like Bennett Griffin were turning from flying to administrative jobs.

The progress Oklahoma made during the 1920s and 1930s would help position the state for military plums like Tinker Air Force Base and the Federal Aviation Administration in Oklahoma City. It established a pool of skilled labor that helped to train workers for huge aircraft factories and training centers during World War II. Today, the aerospace industry is the third largest in the state.

As Arthur Oakley had predicted, aviation was no longer a one-man deal. In the 1950s, the Ardmore pilot was permanently disabled by a stroke. In 1956, seven years before his death, Oakley taped an interview for the state history archives, recalling the early days of aviation. Long moments hung between questions and Oakley's answers.

Near the end of the interview, Oakley's voice gains strength. For a moment, Oakley's thoughts are entwined in the future, not in the past. His words convey the spirit of the men and women who were pioneer aviators.

"Someday," he said slowly. "I want to fly a jet." □

After researching early-day aviation, Oklahoma TODAY's Barbara Palmer lost the ability to nap on airplanes. James Johnson, the aviation writer for The Daily Oklahoman, contributed to the research for this article.

The Air Space Museum

Along the east end of the exhibition floor at the Air Space Museum at the Kirkpatrick Center in Oklahoma City, a walk along orderly rows of aircraft engines offers a condensed history of aviation technology. The earliest engines rotated on a fixed crankshaft like giant eggbeaters; the propeller turned with each revolution of the engine. Later, designers added power by adding cylinders, producing bulky, intricate engines mechanics nicknamed "knuckle-busters." As bullet-shaped jet propulsion engines appear, propellers disappear. Beyond a 10-foot jet engine lies an inky rocket booster engine, like one of the five that launched Saturn V into space.

Looking up at the simple lines of the booster, it's possible to still see the early engines, now small and fussy-looking by comparison. In 1915, before the United States even began producing World War I aircraft, the mathematical equations that supported rocket travel had been devised. Everywhere in the museum, the past and the future collide.

In the 1970s, businessman Clarence Page, formerly a World War I pilot and barnstormer, proposed that a museum be created to honor pioneer Oklahoma aviators who were "sleeping but not recognized." His original concept of the museum expanded to include space travel and the aerospace industry.

This year, the management of the museum has passed from Page, now 91 and in poor health, to the Kirkpatrick Center. But a feeling of proximity to early aviation and to its colorful pioneers still hangs over the museum.

Historical exhibits dominate the first room, chronicling the years between the first airplane flight in Oklahoma in 1910 and World War II. Military memorabilia abounds, documenting the role war played in the development of aviation. Anthony Fokker, a Dutch engineer, revolutionized warfare during World War I when he synchronized an airplane engine with a machine gun, eliminating the problem of bullets hitting the propeller.

Old photographs document the past in a way that words can't. A picture of the legendary stunt flyer Burrell Tibbs shows a paunchy, tired-looking man. Charles Lindbergh poses with members of a Woodward farm family after his plane was forced down there in 1932. Lindbergh and his wife, Anne, smile confidently into the camera. The other faces look awestruck.

Air travel flows into space travel on the first floor. Two space suits donated by astronaut Tom Stafford, from Weatherford, are displayed, descendants of the pressurized suit Wiley Post helped develop in the 1930s. A space capsule used for training Mercury astronauts and a model of a lunar lander contrast with a replica of a 1913 pusher plane.

Upstairs in the research library, Arthur Oakley's scrapbooks bulge with fraying newspaper clippings describing aerial circuses and obituaries of stunt fliers, less skilled or less lucky than Oakley. Fragile flying magazines date back to 1913 when flying was so rare every flight made anywhere was noted, like the names of visiting relatives in a small-town paper.

Second-floor exhibits trace the growth of aviation industry in



Chris Martin and Elizabeth Johnson study an elementary rocket.

Oklahoma, with photographs and histories of wartime aircraft production at McDonnell Douglas, the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, and the Federal Aviation Administration. The newest exhibit is a facsimile cockpit of the AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft maintained at Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City.

Each weekday, Tom Allen, half of a team who were the first black men to fly across the United States, comes in to help schoolchildren clamber into World War II LINK trainers used to teach instrument flying. From the trainers, children crowd into a display of the Challenger cockpit and an Apollo simulator.

Allen shows a visitor the stark interior of Wiley Post's biplane: a stick on the floor and two rudder pedals that controlled the wing flaps.

"Post truly became part of the machine," Allen says. Early pilots flew without the modern buffers of instruments and computers, alone against the vagaries of the elements.

A nearby exhibit honoring the seven Challenger astronauts who died in January 1986 illustrates how much has changed since then, and how little.

—Barbara Palmer

The Air Space Museum, at the Kirkpatrick Center, 2100 N.E. 52nd Street, in Oklahoma City, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$2.50 for children and senior citizens. For information call (405) 424-1443.

WILEY POST

Nothing could stop this one-eyed farm boy from flying—not poverty, not disappointment, not even the shadow of an old secret.

By Clay Lewis

West of Wewoka on a spring afternoon in 1924, townspeople and oil roughnecks gathered in a pasture to watch Burrell Tibbs' Texas Topnotch Fliers. His regular parachute jumper was banged up, so Tibbs said okay to a stocky 25-year-old roughneck who wanted the job. This oil field worker had loved aviation since he first set eyes on an "aeroplane" in 1913. But only once, in 1919, had he flown. Parachutes he knew nothing about.

As he climbed into the front seat of the biwing Canuck, he got instructions from the injured jumper. Burrell Tibbs would fly. Out of the rough pasture they wobbled into the air, climbed to 2,000 feet, and turned over the waiting crowd. "Okay, get ready!" Tibbs yelled.

The roughneck had forgotten his in-

structions. Only yesterday he was working on an oil rig near Holdenville. When he sighted overhead one of Tibbs' Flying Circus airplanes, he decided there and then to follow his dream of 11 years—to take the plunge into aviation.

"Suddenly I recovered myself," he later wrote, "and I threw my leg out over the wing."

Holding tight to the vertical strut, wind beating his clothes, he crawled along the wing. With his free hand he buckled the harness to the vertical strut. As directed, he went to his knees.

Tibbs flew back over the pasture.

"I let go the strut and backed off the wing," he later wrote. For several seconds he swung helplessly from the harness beneath the wing—then remembered to pull the release ring.

He dropped and with a jerk the parachute bloomed. The fields below "looked like brown or green carpets ... I drifted earthward ... and lost the last few feet of altitude slowly because of the cool eddies of air from the damp, plowed meadow beyond."

It was "one of the biggest thrills of my life," he wrote much later.

On that 1924 afternoon Wiley Post began the aviation career which took him, in the short span of 11 years, from Wewoka, Oklahoma, to tumultuous tickertape parades in New York City, heroes' welcomes all over the U.S. and personal receptions at the White House by Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt. His scientific achievements contributed significantly to the advancement of aviation. And that same afternoon Post also set a course that ended in 1935 with the plane crash



His achievements brought him worldwide fame, but Wiley Post was an enigma to most who knew him, uneasy with fame and seldom content.

near Point Barrow, Alaska, that killed him and his close friend, Will Rogers.



Post saw his first airplane, a pusher-type similar to the Wright Brothers', at a 1913 fair at Lawton. The fair celebrated the 12th anniversary of the opening of the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache lands. Featured with the plane were the Moss-Snyder Wild West Show and "old fashioned Indian warfare" put on by 4,000 Indians. Recording these collisions of America's past and future was the new motion picture camera.

At that time Post, age 14, was living with his family on a cotton farm near Marlow. Discontented in school, Post had quit to earn a living as a tinker repairing sewing machines and fixing other household and farm machinery.

In a buggy he and his brother drove through the night to the fair. With the horse cared for he was heading for the new plows and tractors when, "There before my astonished vision was an aeroplane." The moment transformed Post: "I have never seen a bit of machinery for land, sea or sky that has taken my breath away as did that old pusher." He was in love with aviation for the rest of his life.

Through training as a mechanic, construction jobs and Signal Corps Telegraphers School during World War I, Post clung to his dream of becoming an aviator. To gain the wherewithal to buy his own plane and learn to fly, Post became a \$25 per day driller in the oil fields of southwestern Oklahoma. He speculated in wildcat wells. But whenever he approached his dream, he lost his savings and had to remain a driller.

In 1919 he did actually fly. At Walters he paid a barnstormer \$25 to take him up over the checkerboard plains of grazing lands and wheatfields. At this time Post's view of pilots came from popular magazines and was highly romanticized. Although the barnstormer put the old pusher-plane through all

OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



In their 1931 round-the-world flight, Post and Harold Gatty raced the clock to shave 12 days off the previous record. They also battled bedbugs, sleeplessness, mud and a bent propeller.

the stunts it could manage, Post was disappointed. Five-foot-five, 21 years old, this oil drilling son of a cotton farmer gained no great powers through flight. Post and his dream were being tested.

His severest test occurred in 1921-22. According to information collected by Sharon Cooper Calhoun, Wiley Post near Alex attempted to rob several men who then overpowered him. Reportedly he wanted the money for the purchase of his own airplane. On April 28, 1921, in Grady County Court, Post was convicted of conjoint robbery and sentenced to 10 years in the state penitentiary at Granite. On the plains of southwestern Oklahoma, Granite is an imposing, rock, high-walled prison set in the midst of huge spaces of land and sky. From a proud Baptist family, an aspiring aviator who had but once flown, Post, age 23, could scarcely have been placed in a more excruciating predicament. He sank into a "melancholic state," according to his parole, and his condition grew steadily worse. Post may have been near death when the prison physician, Dr. T.J. Nunnery, asked the

governor to parole him. Fourteen months after being locked up, Post was free on June 5, 1922.



When he jumped for the first time in Wewoka that spring afternoon in 1924, Post was no kid. Already he had overcome personal adversity, reached deep understandings of himself and tested his dream.

He worked as an exhibition parachute jumper in Oklahoma from 1924 to 1926, first with Tibbs, then on his own at \$100 a jump. He provided the spectacle that a Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club needed to pull a Saturday crowd into town. His self-understanding gave him insight into crowd psychology. He knew that the "spectators of airplane maneuvers were just a bloodthirsty mob that enjoyed watching men get killed." But he could use this bloodthirstiness to his advantage: he did delayed drops, waiting until the last instant before pulling the ripcord. "My grin on landing, after giving the sidelines a thrill, was not one of pleasure. It was one of victory. I

had fooled them," he later wrote in *Around the World in Eight Days*.

During these years Post learned to fly. In what is now a cow pasture between Wewoka and Seminole, he probably soloed for the first time. He was no longer the enthralled boy of the Lawton fair nor the disillusioned romantic young man of his first flight at Walters. His love of flying had been honed-down to a daring, razor-sharp practicality.

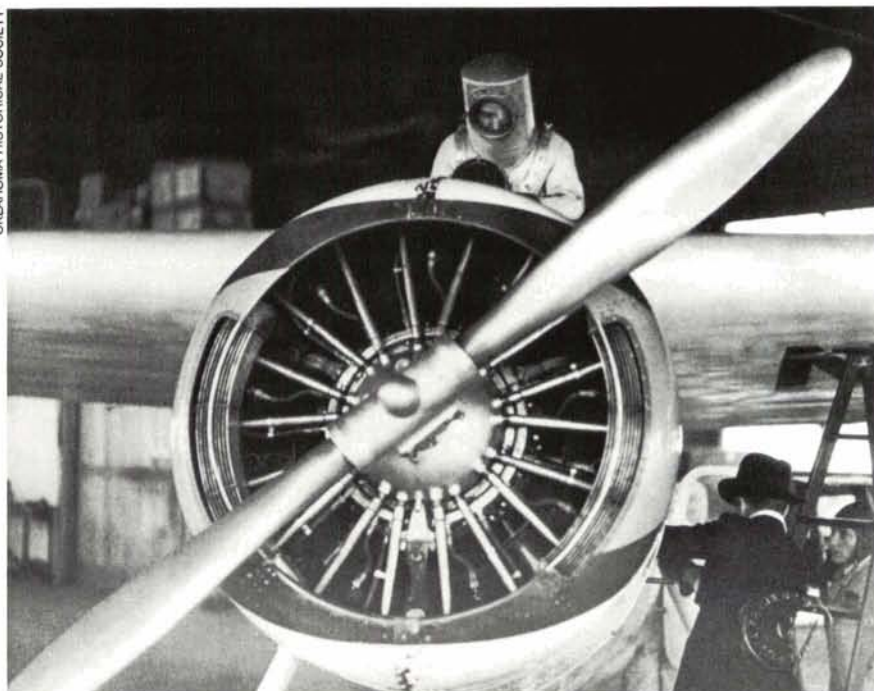
By 1926 barnstorming had exhausted its initial appeal and Post, with only a few hours of solo flying, encountered another adversity: he couldn't make a living barnstorming. "Much as I dislike to admit defeat," he wrote, "I went back to drilling." The pursuit of his dream had landed him back in the Oklahoma oil fields.

And on his first day, at a well south of Wewoka, he was struck in the left eye by a steel splinter. His eye had to be removed. Along with his other difficulties, Post was now a 27-year-old, one-eyed pilot.

He spent two months in the Davis Mountains of southwestern Texas with an uncle hunting quail, deer and coyotes. He there taught himself to gauge depth with his remaining eye. Instead of dropping his flying ambitions, he turned this loss into the realization of his dream of owning an airplane. With poise and great presence of mind, he reversed his adversity.

For his eye he got \$1,800 in Workman's Compensation. He used the money to buy and rebuild (at Ardmore) a Canuck airplane. Shortly before Lindbergh's transatlantic flight in May 1927, Post launched himself into the flying business. During the week he flew oilmen to their leaseholdings in the rough country of southeastern Oklahoma, southern Arkansas and northeast Texas. On weekends he hired out to the remaining flying circuses. He and his new wife, Mae Laine, lived in Duncan. Although there were hard times and financial reverses, Post was making a place for himself in the aviation industry.

OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Flying at high altitudes in a pressurized suit, the forerunner of the modern space suit, Post was the first to ride the river of wind blowing miles above the earth—the jet stream.

But what drove Post was far from content.



Post knew F.C. Hall, an oilman in Chickasha. Hall was, according to Post, a born gambler who had "the best judgment of any man I have known." Hall had, for instance, drilled 300 oil wells and had only two dusters. Hall's good judgment prevailed when he hired one-eyed Wiley Post to fly his new plane, a three-passenger, open-cockpit Travel Air. Now Post had his first steady, well-paying job in aviation, one that would use his skills as a pilot, his knowledge of the terrain of the region and his understanding of the oil business. Wiley and Mae moved to Oklahoma City where Hall had moved his offices. They rented an apartment at 706 W. 29th Street. The Travel Air was kept at an airfield at May and Britton roads.

But Post's past shadowed his new respectability. Licensing for pilots had recently begun, and Post, wary because of his one eye and felony conviction,

reportedly avoided airfields where his lack of a license might be detected. Aided by Hall's influence, Post passed the exams and in 1928 received his pilot's license.

His difficulties with the license were more than compensated by Hall's new plane, a Wasp-motored Lockheed Vega. With its closed cabin and sleek design, it was "the most up-to-date airplane of 1928." Post loved it; aviation historians call this the perfect marriage of man and machine. Flying the *Winnie Mae* into Oklahoma City for the first time, Post "roared over the airport fence" while Hall and his daughter, for whom the plane was named, watched. He "pulled up in a steep climb to show off the tricks of the white bullet ... , putting her through her paces high in the air so that her new owner might see what a beautiful thing his *Winnie Mae* was," he later wrote.

But adversity continued to shadow Post's flying. Hall was tied to boom-and-bust cycles in the oil business. In addition, he was financially hurt by the stock market crash in 1929. As a consequence, Hall reluctantly had to sell the

first *Winnie Mae* back to Lockheed. Post had no job and no airplane.

Yet he had learned to turn adversity into advantage. When he delivered the *Winnie Mae* to Lockheed in Los Angeles, he managed to get hired by them as a test pilot. Although he flew with one eye and had no engineering education, Post was respected for his skill as a pilot and his intuitive understanding of aeronautics. During 1929-30 he flew with Lockheed and worked with the leading aeronautical engineers of the day. Flying with him at Lockheed was Amelia Earhart. Post had turned the loss of the *Winnie Mae* into a superior education in aeronautics and flying.

But Post was no company man. When in June 1930 Hall asked him to supervise the building of a second *Winnie Mae* and to return to Oklahoma as Hall's personal pilot, Post accepted.

Now there wasn't a bad situation to reverse but a good situation to take as far as he desired. "I had hardly got going" flying for Hall "when the old desire to make a record flight took a tight hold on me again." No longer was his arena a Wewoka pasture.



As Post prepared a transcontinental flight, the National Air Races announced a non-stop derby between Los Angeles and Chicago. Post entered. Using engineering knowledge gained in his year at Lockheed, Post prepared the *Winnie Mae* by lowering the angle of her wing in order to gain speed. A navigator with a national reputation, Harold Gatty, charted Post's course. In flight, however, Post's compass failed and he had to fly most of the 1,760 miles by referring maps to the ground. Although this lost 40 minutes, Post still won the National Air Race, \$7,500 in prize money and national recognition.

Without pause he began planning an around-the-world flight. He readied the *Winnie Mae* at the Lockheed factory in Los Angeles. He also readied himself because, more than any other

aviator of the time, Post understood the main limits of aviation to be human, not mechanical. His struggle with melancholy no doubt helped him to see the importance of this human dimension. To cut down on his fatigue, Post learned to keep his mind a total blank, handling the *Winnie Mae* almost automatically. To break up his sleep rhythms, he never slept the same hours on any two days in the same week. To further prepare himself, he restricted his diet. Post tuned himself and the *Winnie Mae*.

*Post loved the
Winnie Mae.
Aviation historians call this the
perfect marriage
of man and machine.*

The flight tested Post's abilities to meet adversity. With Gatty as his navigator, Post was forced by weather to fly blind. At Blagoveshchensk, U.S.S.R., the *Winnie Mae* was so stuck in mud only horses could pull her out, and on a beach near Solomon, Alaska, the plane nosed over, bending the propeller which fortunately Post repaired with a hammer, wrench and stone. In Edmonton, Alberta, mud made a take-off impossible, but the city cleared a paved street of power and telephone lines so the *Winnie Mae* could be on her way. On July 1, 1931, eight days, 15 hours and 51 minutes after leaving New York's Roosevelt Field, the *Winnie Mae* returned. Post had circled the globe in 12 days less time than the *Graf Zeppelin*, the previous record holder. Ten thousand people greeted Post and Gatty. There was a tickertape parade in New York City and a White House reception by President Hoover.

But because of the kind of man he was, Post had more trouble with success than with adversity. He told an interviewer that his flight was a "stunt that didn't advance the mechanics of

aviation one inch." He and Hall quarreled. He was piqued by some press reports that Gatty was the brains behind the flight. His speaking engagements were not successful. Post was "disillusioned," according to a newspaper report, exactly as he had been after his first flight over Walters.

But adversity brought out his best. In the midst of the Great Depression, in a state very hard hit, Post began to plan a solo flight around the world. Oilmen could provide little help, but Post arranged for the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce to sell subscriptions for his flight. A miller in Yukon, Jean Krautill, helped financially. So did aeronautical companies.

When a friend crashed the *Winnie Mae* near Chickasha causing significant damage, Post characteristically used the occasion to improve the airplane's long-flight capabilities.

And Post prepared himself for the adversities of the flight. He underwent long periods of sleeplessness. Old aviators remember Post sitting alone in the *Winnie Mae* in a dark hanger for up to 12 hours.

Arranging to test experimental equipment, he wanted this flight to be no stunt. He had installed on the *Winnie Mae* the Sperry automatic pilot, an automatic radio direction finder and a variable pitch propeller which had not up until then proven reliable.

On July 15, 1933, Post took off alone from Floyd Bennett Field in New York. He was the first to fly non-stop from New York to Berlin—25 hours, 45 minutes. Going on, the *Winnie Mae* was damaged in a landing at Flat, Alaska. But when he returned to Floyd Bennett on July 22, he was the first man to fly around the world alone—seven days, 18 hours, 49 1/2 minutes.

Fifty thousand people greeted him. He was received at the White House by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. His fame was worldwide.

But Post's public appearances were less than successful and he soon devoted himself, instead, to the advance-

ment of aviation. His tests on the around-the-world flight of the auto-pilot, the direction finder and the variable pitch propeller were successful. (All are now standard equipment on most aircraft.) With uncanny accuracy Post saw the future of aviation. In an interview he foresaw blind flying and landings, and "flying the stratosphere." He talked of leaving the atmosphere to orbit the earth.

Post went to Wright Field, Ohio, where he helped to develop and test the world's first pressurized flight suit in the first U.S. altitude chamber. To equip the *Winnie Mae* for high altitudes, he installed supercharging equipment. He tested the pressure suit and modified *Winnie Mae* in an ascension over the Chicago World's Fair of 1934. He rose to 40,000 feet, a little short of the altitude record. Now his attempts at record-breaking were designed to test new equipment and to attract financial support.

In autumn 1934 Post set up in Bartlesville where he and his wife lived with, and were financially backed by, Frank Phillips of Phillips Petroleum. Trying to reach an altitude of 50,000 feet, Post on December 3 climbed to 48,000 feet before equipment failure forced him to descend. On December 7 he reached an unverified altitude of 50,000 feet and, almost incidentally, discovered the jet stream—a river of wind flowing at great speeds from west to east over the U.S. (Today the jet stream is routinely used by commercial aircraft.)

This discovery opened to Post a new realm of challenge. Using the jet stream, he would fly at much faster speeds nonstop coast-to-coast. Post sought to combine his long distance achievements, his work in high altitude pressurization and his recent discovery of the jet stream.

On February 22, 1935, he took off from Burbank, California, but sabotage forced him to crash land in the desert. His successes were now making him the target of envy. On March 5, he again attempted the coast-to-coast

flight but mechanical problems forced him to land at Cleveland, Ohio, after flying an astonishing average speed of 279 m.p.h., thanks to the jet stream. He tried again on April 14 and June 15, but each time equipment failures brought him down. Although extensively modified, this was the same *Winnie Mae* he and Gatty had flown

With uncanny accuracy, Post saw the future of aviation. In an interview he foresaw "flying the stratosphere" and talked of leaving the atmosphere to orbit the earth.

around the world in 1931; the plane was tired and so was Post.

Post achieved this goal of a coast-to-coast flight at great speed only in the fantasy of movies. In 1934-35 he played a pilot in the film *Air Hawks*, which starred Ralph Bellamy. The plot involved a firm struggling to get airmail contracts. The day is saved when Post flies coast-to-coast to win the contract. Post's love of aviation had begun as he read magazines about aviation on the family cotton farm near Marlow. Now he lived in an uneasy alliance with that romanticized world.



Post was nearly out of money when Will Rogers offered to pay him to fly the two of them to Alaska. Rogers was tired from making the film *Steamboat 'Round the Bend* and wanted the trip for relaxation. Preparing to sell the *Winnie Mae* to the Smithsonian (where it is still displayed), Post pieced together a Lockheed Orion-Explorer from parts of two wrecked planes. Since Rogers

was in a hurry to be off, Post went ahead and installed pontoon floats that were too nose-heavy for the plane. Tired, he did not have his usually acute judgment. Post was, according to friends, again disillusioned with aviation. To escape his international celebrity, he was contemplating a move (with his wife Mae) to Alaska.

But, as the world knows, on August 15, 1935, Post and Rogers landed the Orion-Explorer near Point Barrow to ask directions. When they took off the plane had risen only 50 feet when the engine quit and the plane, weighted down by its pontoons, smacked into the shallow water. Post and Rogers were killed.

Post's funeral was the largest ever held, before or since, in Oklahoma. Twenty thousand people viewed his casket at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Quoting Isaiah 60:8 Post's eulogist asked the central question: "Who are these that fly as a cloud?"

Walter Harrison, Post's close friend, gave the answer that sufficed for many years: "Post, the nerveless, taciturn, all-steel farmboy, was an enigma to most of those with whom he came into contact. He came as near to being a mechanical flying machine as any human being who ever held a stick." However, now that we know the full extent of the adversity Post overcame, we can at last know fully his character and the exact nature of his remarkable human achievement. ®

Wiley Post was buried in Memorial Park Cemetery in Oklahoma City. His wife Mae, who never remarried, was buried beside him after her death in 1984.

*Clay Lewis teaches writing and literature at the University of Oklahoma. In addition to newspapers, periodicals, public documents and interviews, the author has extensively used for reference the books *Around the World in Eight Days*, by Wiley Post and Harold Gatty, and *Wiley Post, His Winnie Mae, and the World's First Pressure Suit*, by Stanley R. Mohler and Bobby H. Johnson.*

PORTFOLIO

"Light is everything," says Enid photographer Jan Randolph Couch. Changing seasons bring changes in the quality of light, preserved in Couch's photograph of the sun's dying fire against the roofline of an old barn. She captured the morning sunshine as it gilds children on their way towards a new school year—with new clothes and a new teacher.

Early on the morning of the first frost, J.R. Toland photographed an Adair County field layered in freezing fog. "I love that first snap, that first bite," he says. "Autumn is my beginning."



Jan Randolph Couch
Windmill near Lahoma



Jan Randolph Couch
Children walking to school, Enid



J.R. Toland
Pasture, Adair County



Picture-Perfect Winners



Enid photographer John Hightower won first place in the amateur's scenic category and grand prize for the amateur division with this image of fall foliage in Talimena State Park.

Images of lustrous foliage, wild turkeys coping with winter, silhouetted fishermen and sizzling hot dogs resulted from a challenge *Oklahoma TODAY* sent to the state's photographers. The challenge was brief: 'Take your camera and imagination to any of the state's 32 parks during the fall and winter months and send us photographs that show inventively composed subject matter and superb technical quality.

Oklahoma TODAY's first photography contest—open to children, as well as amateur and professional photographers—drew more than 200 entries in eight categories.

The Thompson family, a trio of photographers from Lone Grove, turned trips to Lake Murray State Park into three first-place prizes. And Jerry Poppenhouse, a photographer for Phillips Petroleum Company, swept the professional division with images taken during 1988's plentiful snowfall in Osage Hills State Park.

The winners of each category won two-day, one-night photography expeditions guided by park naturalists in the state park of their choice. Second-

place winners were awarded a year's subscription to *Oklahoma TODAY*. Photographers who placed third won an Oklahoma state park T-shirt. Each child who entered received an Oklahoma state park patch and certificate.

Grand prize winners—one from the professional and one from the amateur divisions—were awarded three-day, two-night stays in a state park or resort.

We're proud to announce the winners, along with the park where the winning photograph was taken.

Children, scenic

First place: Candace Aikens, Norman, Red Rock Canyon State Park

Second place: Careylyn Stucky, Arnett, Boiling Springs State Park

Third place: Donald Thompson, Oklahoma City, Roman Nose State Park

Children, wildlife

First place: Becky Cukjati, Tulsa, Sequoyah State Park

Children, outdoor recreation

First place: Gretchen Thompson, Lone Grove, Lake Murray State Park

Second place: Charla Dobson, Weatherford, Red Rock Canyon State Park

Third place: Jennifer Cassada, Arnett, Boiling Springs State Park

Amateur, wildlife

First place: Dennis Thompson, Lone Grove, Lake Murray State Park

Second place: Susan Loy, Claremore, Osage Hills State Park

Third place: Jack Anderson, Waukomis, Great Salt Plains State Park

Amateur, outdoor recreation

First place: Donna Thompson, Lone Grove, Lake Murray State Park

Second place: Jack Anderson, Waukomis, Great Salt Plains State Park

Third place: Dale Yocum, Edmond, Robbers Cave State Park

Amateur, scenic

First place: John Hightower, Enid, Talimena State Park

Second place: Marsha Jones, Broken Bow, Beavers Bend State Park

Third place: Daniel Rose, Idabel, Hochatown State Park

Professional, scenic

First place: Jerry Poppenhouse, Bartlesville, Osage Hills State Park

Second place: Bob Smith, Tulsa, Greenleaf State Park

Professional, wildlife

First place: Jerry Poppenhouse, Bartlesville, Osage Hills State Park

Grand prize

Amateur: John Hightower's fall scenic from Talimena State Park

Professional: Jerry Poppenhouse's photograph of wild turkeys in Osage Hills State Park

The magazine will sponsor another photography contest this fall and winter. Photographs must be taken between Oct. 1, 1988, and March 31, 1989, in any state park. For a list of rules, categories and prizes, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Oklahoma TODAY, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

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The First Lady's BAZAAR

By Ann DeFrange

FRED W. MARVEL



Stillwater weaver Donna Frank demonstrates her craft while tending her display. Around her is a sampler of the crafts shown at the bazaar.



wheat weaver from Enid ... a basket maker from Stillwater ... a bronze sculptor from Tahlequah ... a clock builder from Sayre ... a photographer from Edmond ... a silversmith from Anadarko ... a bead worker from Holdenville.

Their products illustrate the skills that have been passed through generations of Oklahomans and which are displayed proudly in homes throughout the state.

To bring the artists together with art-appreciators, the annual First Lady's Bazaar will be staged for the second time in the location that proved so profitable for it last year—the yard of the historic Harn Homestead in Oklahoma City.

The statehood-era setting made an appropriate showcase for crafts which may be older than the state itself. The place and products spanned a time when many of the crafts—the quilts, the pottery, the baskets—filled a functional need in households to the present when such items can be enjoyed as decorative art.

More than 3,000 people visited that first bazaar to choose the work of 125 artisans, says Sally Kern, assistant to First Lady Shirley Bellmon.

All the craftsmen are Oklahomans. The Oklahoma Alliance for Artisans, of which Mrs. Bellmon is board president, was formed to help craftsmen "find places to put their goods." The First Lady originated the idea several years ago when she and her daughters began holding small crafts shows for neighbors at her farm in Billings. She expanded the concept statewide after she moved to the Governor's Mansion.

The alliance also works to encourage Oklahomans to "take pride in the talent right in their own backyard," Kern says. "People don't need to go purchase country crafts in Kentucky to place in shops in Oklahoma. We've got it right here."

Mrs. Bellmon's staff originally surveyed the work of 3,000 craftsmen

throughout the state and now lists more than 900 on its roster. That list frequently goes to planners of small festivals and arts and crafts shows. A further benefit of the alliance, says Kern, is marketing opportunities for artisans through such shows or through wholesale contacts.

The first bazaar gave her contacts for other shows, says Betty Kendrick, a

***Jack Hughes
ships carvings to
California where
"they go wild for
it. They're very
interested in
what's made in
Oklahoma."***

Stillwater weaver of oak and reed baskets. That skill started out "for my own enjoyment" until "it kind of turned around, things started happening." She now has arrangements with a few shops and galleries and is looking at wholesale markets.

Kendrick sees a growing appreciation for "fine crafted work," and that growth may be due to the artisans themselves at just such shows. She spends a lot of time at her booth—and notes that other craftsmen do, too—explaining the techniques, skills and time involved. After a demonstration, she says, "people have a lot more appreciation."

The time involved is necessarily a part-time allocation for Carl Fuchs of Sayre. By day he operates a meat processing plant, but in his private time he fashions small desk clocks and weather instruments from oak. He's found a pleasant and profitable market in the numerous local festivals around the state, but the bazaar was a stroke of luck. Like any artist, "I have visions of doing it full time, but I doubt I could."

Jack Hughes of Shawnee represents a group of craftsmen who categorize

their work in hobby status. His wood carvings of duck decoys and other wild birds seem an unlikely extension of his career as an auto mechanic, but Hughes says after retirement it kept him working with his hands and with familiar tools.

He limits his shows now, so that his leisure time can also include the fishing and travel he covets, but the contacts with art appreciators are almost as satisfying as the creation, he says. "It's very important to me when people come up and look at my stuff and brag on it. It makes me feel good."

Hughes ships some carvings to California where "they just go wild for it. They're very interested in what's made in Oklahoma."

This year's bazaar will offer 120 booths filled with glass art, pottery, ceramics, jewelry, fine arts, leather goods, clothing, needlework, tole painting, porcelain and china, floral arrangements, toys and dolls, quilts. All, of course, made in Oklahoma. 

Writer Ann DeFrance lives in Oklahoma City.



Getting There

More than 120 artisans and craftsmen have been invited to exhibit their work at the First Lady's Bazaar, which is scheduled September 30-October 1 at the Harn Homestead and 89er Museum, 312 N.E. 18th Street in Oklahoma City. The show will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

To reach the Harn Homestead, exit I-35 at N.E. 10th Street and drive west to Lincoln Boulevard. Turn north on Lincoln to 18th, where you'll turn west.

A \$2 admission fee covers the arts and crafts show and a tour of the museum. For more information, call Sally Kern at (405) 521-2342.



PUTTING ON THE



By Sheila Samples

Photographs by David Koelsch

Unless you're a cat person or a complete curmudgeon, you'll probably agree that "dog is man's best friend."

There are hundreds of such adages, and as many more platitudes and analogies that reflect how completely man relates to this animal.

The natural result of this bond is the dog show, a national year-round, multi-million-dollar phenomenon which has mushroomed from kids claiming neighborhood bragging rights and exclusive events attended by high-toned society breeders.

American Kennel Club superintendent Jack Onofrio of Oklahoma City says that, during the mid-'70s when oil and gas prices skyrocketed and people could no longer afford long hauls to show their pets, AKC shored up its struggling act by allowing city and area kennel clubs to "cluster" shows, which allows four clubs to sponsor shows at one location. That means a Dalmatian breeder from Perry could travel to Tulsa or Oklahoma City for four days, enter four separate shows and get four chances to win ribbons and coveted AKC championship points. This re-

Tulsa breeder Joan Stainer has loved English Setters for 55 years and says of champion Suellen, one of the 10 nation's best: "I'd love her if she were ugly."

sulted in new life for Oklahoma's kennel club shows, which draw from rural areas throughout the state, as well as from more than 20 other states. And

*Owners who
want to get an
edge on their
competition can
pick up anti-static
coat gloss,
breath mints, oil
of mink—even
Faberge's Grand
Finale holding
mist spray
cologne.*

not only can breeders score big at the state's two cluster shows—where more than 2,500 dogs compete and their owners spend more than \$2 million a year—they can also enter individual club shows in Lawton, Shawnee, Enid and Muskogee.

Like the opera crowd, the dog show world is a whole "other" society. If

you're an outsider, you must come to grips with the idea that things don't necessarily have to make sense, that each society has its own rules of behavior, its own order. To a dog show first-timer, it's like watching a ballet dancer burst through the curtains at one side of the theater and soar magnificently across the stage to disappear into the dark recesses of the other side. You never quite grasp what it was you thought you saw, but an indelible after-image remains to haunt you.

"Did I just give way to an English Bulldog wearing a ballcap with a propeller on top?" Unbelieving, you whirl, but the crowd has parted and closed, and the after-image of a disgruntled, heavy-jowled midget jogging purposefully through a clamoring press of humanity doesn't quite ring true.

A vision of spun angel hair seems to float toward you. It appears to be buoyed by unbelievably delicate legs and tiny, perfectly manicured feet, which scarcely touch the ground. It has been back-brushed, blown-dry and aerosol-sprayed until it is a perfect shimmering stark-white circle. It looks vaguely familiar, and it isn't until you search out the sparkling, intelligent black eyes of a poodle that you recognize it for what it is.

You may not have stepped through

the looking glass, but you're convinced that you have your nose pressed hard against it.

Once there, however, it soon becomes apparent that the man-dog relationship extends beyond friendship. Dog is also man's bread and butter.

For starters, a dog show is a star-studded, full-scale production with trained canine performers that know exactly what to do. And all are good, most are better and some are the very best at doing it.

A dog show doesn't just happen. It takes battalions of people who know what they're doing to pull it off successfully. It's big business, especially for folks like Onofrio, who, as one of 12 licensed AKC contractors, is literally a traveling dog show. Onofrio's eight-truck fleet travels more than 500,000 miles annually, and each carries all the equipment and services needed—down to the last scrap of paper—to put on a successful show.

"I love dogs," says Onofrio, who freely admits German Shepherds are his favorite breed, "and I'm totally involved in the business. My greatest reward is doing something that I love to do—and being paid for it."

He provides ring equipment—carpeting, runs and neat picket-fence boundaries—and fat little show catalogs with up to 150 pages each. Sixteen years ago, Onofrio and his crew staged 62 shows; today, he and his 55 employees put on a whopping 350 major all-breed shows a year.

The Lawton-Fort Sill Kennel Club offers one of the finest shows in the country, and annually draws entries in most of the 130 different breed categories. Although the judging is in the mammoth Great Plains Coliseum and in the nearby Multi-Purpose building, the attendant activity sprawls throughout the entire Comanche County Fairgrounds. The fair barn, an acre of space, is one huge beauty salon with backstage, pre-show frenzy that could rival a Miss Universe Contest.

Steam curlers, blow-dryers, scissors and crimpers go non-stop throughout



John Ohnmacht and Dachshund Albert compete with other breeds in a variety class.

the event. Combs, brushes, oils—even breath mints and toothbrushes—clutter table tops. Dogs are bent, folded and twisted into every conceivable position. They sit, stand or lean for hours. They yawn, patiently endure—even sleep—through the elaborate, time-consuming toilet that must be performed before each show.

All of these beauty supplies and more can be purchased at a "Doggie Wonderland" supermarket right on the premises. Ray and Steve Courtney of Grapevine, Texas, have set up shop in the Coliseum for the past 15 years, and offer about 5,000 items, most of which are specifically designed to pamper the most discriminating pet.

There are bones made of wood, rawhide, rubber and, of course, the real thing. Owners who want to get an edge on their competition can pick up lint rollers, anti-static coat gloss, oil of mink and even Faberge's Grand Finale holding mist spray cologne. The dog biscuit business is booming, and the Courtneys offer flavors of munchies that Old Shep can only dream about. There are books on every subject, from potty-training animals to teaching them proper table manners.

"We get asked for some crazy things," Steve Courtney says. "We sell car seats for dogs, seat belts, pajamas, raincoats and slickers, sweaters—even 'London Dog' trenchcoats. But the wildest item I've ever sold is a specially made pooch brass daybed. It wouldn't matter if we brought 10,000 items to a show. We always have requests for things that nobody's thought of yet."

In last year's Lawton show, 1,043 dogs represented 107 different breeds in the show, and ranged from the familiar Shepherd, Doberman and Cocker Spaniel to the more exotic Rhodesian Ridgeback, Papillon, Keeshonden and even a phantom-like Pharaoh Hound.

A hands-down favorite with spectators and breeders alike were the 32 good-humored Bulldogs, formerly known as English Bulldogs. Totally businesslike, their "it's a dirty job but someone has to do it" attitude evokes grins from everyone, including a judge or two.

"Every kid in the country should have a Bulldog," says Wayne Brower, a building contractor from Pleasant Hill, Missouri, who has produced 21 champion Bulldogs in the last 11 years. "In fact, I wish every kid could have *that* one," he says, pointing to Max, his squatty champion.

"Max is friendly and fun, and he's easy to care for. I get tired just watching other folks get their dogs ready to show. All I do is bathe Max before I leave home. When we get to where we're going, I clean out the wrinkles, give him a big hug, and he's ready for the ring."

Brower says Max is a ham and makes more money on his own than all of his other 17 Bulldogs combined. Max is nationally known as "Champion Shady Tree Spike" and nationally accepted as one of the best of his breed.

"He loves it," Brower says of his champion, "the whole thing. He loves to travel, and he loves to compete. After he'd won a few ribbons, he be-

gan thinking he was entitled to win.

"Once," Brower recalls, "after Max came out of the ring, he tore over to the photo stand and hopped up to get his picture taken. The judge, who hadn't pointed to a winner yet, looked at me, frowned, and said, 'Did you plan that?' I hadn't," Brower says, "but I sure was glad that Max won. It would have been embarrassing to haul him away from the camera if he didn't deserve to have his picture taken."

Brower, like other serious breeders and showmen, spends thousands of dollars each year and travels 30,000 to 40,000 miles along a grueling dog show circuit. He says he'll retire Max from the ring this year and admits he recently turned down \$10,000 for him.

A dog will bring whatever the buyer is willing to pay. Onofrio recalls that his friend, Jane Firestone (of Firestone Tires), once spent nearly a million dollars on a German Shepherd who had racked up more than 200 "Best in Show" awards.

People give a wondrous array of reasons for showing their pets. Joan Stainer of Tulsa—who has produced 48 champion English Setters, including winners at the Chicago International, Beverly Hills Kennel Club and New York's Westminster shows—says many breeders are committed to the idea of producing a perfect specimen of the breed they love. A more common reason, even among breeders of Stainer's stature, is owners love their dogs.

"I can't imagine life without them," says Stainer, who once hosted a talk show about dogs and has a hospital-quality incubator in her kennel. "Dogs are therapy. I solve all my problems while brushing a dog. The more matted they are, the better."

For breeders like Stainer and Brower, winning is the bottom-line at any show, and that's why judges are the undisputed VIPs at any such gathering. Never are faces watched more closely for fleeting expressions than when dogs are going through their paces in competition.

Rules are stringently adhered to. As



Do owners and dogs look alike? Compare the profiles of Debbie Golden and Nike.

a judge goes over each dog in the ring, he compares him to a mental picture of the perfect dog of that breed. He looks at the physical structure, such as muscle tone, the physical condition—proper weight, animation—and watches a dog's gait closely from the front, side and rear. A dog who is shy or vicious is penalized heavily.

It takes an ebullient spirit to hold up through the challenging jaunt through the ring maze to the top of the heap. First-time winners face Best-of-Breed competition with dogs who are already champions. Then there's the Best-of-Winners contest, and on and on until all breeds are judged and only one dog in each breed remains undefeated.

It's still not over. Dogs then change gears and compete in one of seven groups—Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, Non-Sporting and Herding. These seven winners then compete in the final Best-in-Show competition. This is the moneymaker, the bull of the woods, the dog that every owner believes is his. Getting the world to acknowledge it is what keeps the wheels rolling from show to show. Although cash awards are rarely offered, potential earnings come from

the title itself—in stud fees and for pups produced by champions.

"It costs a lot of money if you don't win," Brower says at the end of the show. "It also costs a lot of money if you do win. But what the heck," he said, nodding at a rapidly retreating Max, who was headed straight for the photo stand, "it gives us all a chance to strut." □

Freelance writer Sheila Samples lives in Lawton. David Koelsch is an Oklahoma City-based photographer.

If you'd like to visit the "other" world of dog shows, here's the schedule of fall shows sponsored by Oklahoma's kennel clubs. For more information, call (405) 427-8181.

Oct. 16 Sooner State Kennel Club, Garfield County Fairgrounds, Enid

Oct. 30 Lawton-Fort Sill Kennel Club, Great Plains Coliseum, Lawton

Nov. 4 Muskogee Kennel Club, Civic Center, Muskogee

Nov. 6 Mid-Continent Kennel Club of Tulsa, Tulsa County Fairgrounds

Nov. 8 Bartlesville Kennel Club, Tulsa State Fairgrounds

Nov. 9 Seminole Kennel Club, Heart of America Exposition Center, Shawnee

Nov. 10 Oklahoma City Combined Specialities Association, State Fairgrounds, OKC

Nov. 11 Oklahoma City Kennel Club, State Fairgrounds, OKC

Nov. 12 Mid Del-Tinker Kennel Club, State Fairgrounds, OKC

Nov. 13 Town and Country Kennel Club of Norman, State Fairgrounds, OKC

Nov. 14 Canadian Valley Kennel Club, State Fairgrounds, OKC



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SEPTEMBER ♦ OCTOBER 88

ENTERTAINMENT

CALENDAR

♦ PRIME TIMES ♦

♦ **Sept. 5** Zoom to the finish line or vie for laid-back honors in the "Poky Okie" division at the KRMG Great Raft Race in Tulsa. A flotilla of bedecked (and bedraggled) crafts make the trip along the Arkansas River. ♦ **Sept. 17** Join the crowd as more than 1,000 bicyclists pedal a 52-mile course along the Old Chisholm Trail to honor the Cherokee Strip Opening. Or cheer from the finish line in Enid, savoring Indian food and dancing. Just like in 1893, the race begins in Kansas. ♦ **Oct. 1-2** "Oktoberfest" booths sprout on the manicured grounds of the Marland Estate in Ponca City, along with polka music, bratwurst and handiworks. (Former Gov. E.W. Marland always liked a good party.) ♦ **Oct. 21-31** Get spooked at the "Ghost and and Goblins Tour" through the Alabaster Caverns. Count Dracula just might pop up from behind a pink boulder.



MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

SEPTEMBER

- 1-30 Works by Jean Howe, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- 1-30 "The World of Sports," Int'l Photography Hall of Fame and Museum, OKC, (405) 424-4055
- 10-Nov. 6 "Robert Colescott: A Retrospective," OU Museum of Art, Norman, (405) 325-3272
- 10-Oct. 30 "Northern New Mexico, 1958: A Day on the Mountain," OU Museum of Art, Norman, (405) 325-3272
- 11-Nov. 13 "VisionMakers," Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, (918) 749-7941
- 17-Nov. 16 "R. Brownell McGrew: Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings," Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, (918) 582-3122
- 17-Nov. 27 "Starry Skies and Dusty Trails," Kirkpatrick Planetarium, OKC, (405) 424-5545
- 18-Nov. 6 Paintings and Drawings by Pietro Lazzari, OK Museum of Art, OKC, (405) 840-2759
- 24-Nov. 30 "Cross Timbers: Oklahoma Landmark," OK Museum of Natural History, Norman, (405) 325-4711

25-Oct. 26, Sculpture by Kevin M. Irvin, Gardiner Art Gallery, Stillwater, (405) 624-6016

OCTOBER

- 1-31 Tapestries by Pamela Husky, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- 1-31 Sculpture by Laurie Spencer, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- 1-Nov. 30 "Slot Canyons," Int'l Photography Hall of Fame and Museum, OKC, (405) 424-4055
- 2 Fiber Arts by Edna Davis Jackson, Southern Plains Indian Museum and Crafts Center, Anadarko, (405) 247-6221
- 4-Nov. 15 "Prints by 20th Century Artists, West Gallery, Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 427-5461
- 8 "Art Under the Oaks," Five Civilized Tribes Museum, Muskogee, (918) 683-1701
- 15-Nov. 13 Works by Hsiao-Yen Yeh, Firehouse Art Center, Norman, (405) 329-4523



DRAMA

SEPTEMBER

- 8-25 "West Side Story," Jewel Box Theatre, OKC, (405) 521-1786

- 9-11, 13-18 "The Nerd," Theatre Tulsa, (918) 744-1168
 9-11, 15-18, "Anything Goes," Pollard Theatre, Guthrie, (405) 282-2800
 22-25 29-Oct. 1 "Jerry's Girls," Community Center, Bartlesville, (918) 337-2787
 16-17 "Harvey," Lawton Community Theater, (405) 355-1600
 23-Oct. 1 "Prime Time Mime," Sooner Theatre, Norman, (405) 360-1162
 30-Oct. 8 "Sherlock's Last Case," American Theatre Co., Tulsa, (918) 747-9494

OCTOBER

- 6-7 "Oliver," Bartlesville Theatre Guild, Community Center, Bartlesville, (918) 337-2787
 14-16, 20-23, "Steel Magnolias," The Pollard Theatre, Guthrie, (405) 282-2800
 27-30, Nov. 3-6 "Alone Together," Jewel Box Theatre, OKC, (405) 521-1786
 10-12 "Night Watch," Theatre Tulsa, (918) 744-1168



FAIRS & FESTIVALS

SEPTEMBER

- 1-3 Caddo County Fair, Anadarko, (405) 247-6651
 1-3 Kiowa County Fair, Hobart, (405) 726-5643
 1-3 Tillman County Fair, Frederick, (405) 335-5541
 1-3 Fall Festival, Coweta, (918) 486-2513
 3-4 Krebs Ethnic Festival, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Krebs, (918) 423-2842
 3-5 Arts Festival OK, OKCCC, OKC, (405) 682-7591
 5 Watermelon Festival, Cleo Springs, (405) 438-2536
 5-11 Cherokee Strip Celebration, Enid, (918) 237-2494
 6-10 Stephens County Fair, Duncan, (405) 255-0510
 8-10 Lefflore County Fair, Poteau, (918) 647-9178
 8-10 Cleveland County Fair, Norman, (405) 360-4721
 9-11 Chili Cook-off and Bluegrass Festival, downtown Tulsa, (918) 583-0032
 9-11 Festifall '88, Kerr Park, OKC, (405) 236-1426
 9-11 Mayes County Fair, Pryor, (918) 825-3241
 10 Canna Festival, City Park, Carnegie, (405) 654-2121
 10 Southwest Festival of the Arts, Means Park, Weatherford, (405) 772-7744
 10-11 Arts and Crafts Festival, Oologah, (918) 443-2790
 15-18 Fiesta '88, Williams Green, Tulsa, (918) 622-8438
 15-18 Jubilation, Mohawk Park, Tulsa, (918) 592-7877
 16-Oct. 2 State Fair of Oklahoma, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 948-6700
 16-18 Rogers County Fair, Claremore, (918) 341-2736
 17 Calf Fry Festival and Cook-off, Vinita, (918) 256-7803
 17-18 Fall Festival of the Arts, Civic Center, Elk City, (405) 225-0207
 23-25 Pelican Festival, Community Center, Grove, (918) 786-2289
 23-25 Indian Summer '88 Festival, Bartlesville Community Center, (918) 336-0095
 24 Pilot Club Chili Cook-off, Lake Ponca Park, Ponca City, (405) 767-8888
 24 Fallfest '88, Antlers, (405) 298-3338

- 24 Scottish Games and Gathering, Manion Park, Tulsa, (918) 227-2662
 24-25 Int'l Festival, McMahon Plaza, Lawton, (405) 248-8055
 29-Oct. 9 Tulsa State Fair, Expo Square, Tulsa, (918) 744-1113

OCTOBER

- 1 Fall Fest, Fuqua Park, Duncan, (405) 255-0510
 1 Czech Festival, Yukon, (405) 354-3567
 1 Oktoberfest, downtown Pauls Valley, (405) 238-6491
 1 Firefighters Fall Festival and Chili Cook-off, Grady County Fairgrounds, Chickasha, (405) 224-6615
 1-2 Arts and Crafts Festival, City Hall, Sallisaw, (918) 775-2585
 1-2 Oktoberfest, Marland Estate, Ponca City, (405) 767-8888
 1-2 Fall Festival of the Arts, SEOSU, Durant, (405) 934-0848
 8-9 Sorghum Festival, Kerr Center, Poteau, (918) 647-9989
 14-16 Oktoberfest, Hardy Murphy Coliseum, Ardmore, (405) 223-4270
 20-23 Oktoberfest, River Parks, Tulsa, (918) 582-0051
 21-22 Pumpkin Festival of the Arts, Caddo County Fairgrounds, Anadarko, (405) 247-6651
 22 Sorghum Festival, downtown Wewoka, (405) 257-5485



MUSIC & DANCE

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Twilight Concert Series, Chandler Park, Tulsa, (918) 583-0032
 9-10 Bartlesville Symphony Pops Concert, Community Center, Bartlesville, (918) 337-2787
 9-11 Tulsa Ballet Theatre, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 585-2572
 11 Square Dance Hoedown, River Parks, (918) 582-0051
 11, 15, 18, 22 Concert, Chamber Orchestra OKC, Christ the King Church, OKC, (405) 842-6683
 17 Lawton Philharmonic, Lawton, (405) 248-2001
 22 Classics Symphony, Tulsa Philharmonic, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 584-2533
 27 Chamber Soloists of America, Seretean Center, Stillwater, (405) 624-6137
 30, Oct. 1-2 "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," Cimarron Circuit Opera Co., Casady Theater, OKC, (405) 364-8962

OCTOBER

- 1 Jazz singer Nancy Wilson, Tulsa Philharmonic Pops Concert, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 584-2533
 7-9 Tulsa Ballet Theatre, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 585-2575
 9 Organ Concert by Almut Rossler, Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, Guthrie, (405) 282-7242
 20 Flutist Ransom Wilson, Tulsa Philharmonic, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa, (918) 584-2533
 21-22 Ballet Oklahoma, Civic Center Music Hall, OKC, (405) 843-9898

- 22 Vienna Choir Boys, Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, Guthrie, (405) 282-7242
- 25 Montreux Band, Seretean Center, Stillwater, (405) 624-6137
- 29 Ohio Top Brass and the Bartlesville Choral Society, Community Center, Bartlesville, (918) 337-2787

INDIAN EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 1-5 Cherokee National Holiday, Cherokee Heritage Center, Tahlequah, (918) 456-3742
- 2-4 Int'l Pow Wow, 101 Ranch Rodeo Grounds, Ponca City, (405) 767-8888
- 2-5 Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festivities, Capitol Grounds, Tuskahoma, (405) 924-8280

OCTOBER

- 8-9 Black Leggings Ceremonial, Indian City USA, Anadarko, (405) 247-6651

RODEO & HORSE EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 2-3 Prison Rodeo, OK State Prison, McAlester, (918) 423-2550
- 2-3 Talihina Roundup Club Jr. Rodeo, Talihina, (918) 567-3434
- 3-5 PRCA Rodeo of Champions, Elk City, (405) 225-0207
- 3-5 Buckskin Horse Show, Claremore, (918) 341-5045
- 5 Labor Day Pasture Roping, Claremore, (918) 789-2408
- 8-10 Barnes and Son Open Rodeo, Muskogee, (918) 682-2401
- 8-10 Women's Nat'l Finals Rodeo, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, 1-800-234-3393
- 8-10 Great Plains Stampede PRCA Rodeo, Altus, (405) 482-0210
- 9-11 Shrine Rodeo, Garfield County Fairgrounds, Enid, (405) 242-3003
- 10-11 Pinto Horse Show, Expo Square, Tulsa, (918) 744-1113
- 11 Mayes County Championship Roping, Pryor, (918) 865-1921
- 17-18 AHSAS Nat'l Dressage Championships, Expo Center, Shawnee, (405) 751-1049
- 18 Heart of OK Barrel Racing, Expo Center, Shawnee, (405) 279-2321

OCTOBER

- 7-9 World's Richest Roping, Claremore, (918) 789-2408
- 10-16 Grand Nat'l and World Championship Morgan Horse Show, OK State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 278-8912
- 17-22 Wrangler Cutting, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, 1-800-234-3393
- 29-30 Saddle Horse Show, Expo Square, Tulsa, (918) 744-1113

- 29-30 Osage Steer Roping Finals, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, 1-800-234-3393
- 30-Nov. 6 World Championship Appaloosa Horse Show, OKC State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 278-8912



SPECIAL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 1-4 10th World Series of Fiddling, Powderhorn Park, Langley, (405) 732-3964
- 2-5 Antique Airplane Fly-In, Bartlesville Municipal Airport, (918) 336-0095
- 5 Krebs Terrapin Derby, American Legion Ballpark, Krebs, (918) 426-4992
- 5 KRMG Great Raft Race, Arkansas River, Tulsa, (918) 582-0051
- 10-11 Sport, Boat and Travel Show, Mannford, (918) 865-2000
- 11 Olde Tyme Picnic in the Park, Nicoma Park, (405) 769-6635
- 16-18 Quilt Show and Retreat, Fin and Feather Lodge, Gore, (918) 487-5148
- 17 Run of '93, Cherokee, (405) 596-3053
- 17 Old Settlers Celebration, downtown Wakita, (405) 594-2200
- 17 Pioneer Day, Cleveland, (918) 358-2131
- 17 Great Land Rush Bicycle Race, Enid, (405) 249-4371
- 17-18 Guthrie Road Celebration, Historic District, Guthrie, (405) 282-1947
- 18 Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats and Magicians, McMahon Memorial Auditorium, Lawton, (405) 248-8055
- 24 Bass Tournament, Pryor, (918) 825-0157
- 29 Shanghai Acrobats and Magicians, Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, Guthrie, (405) 282-7242

OCTOBER

- 6-30 OK Arts Institute, Quartz Mountain, Lone Wolf, (405) 842-0890
- 8 Fall Celebration Fish Fry, Muskogee, (918) 682-6602
- 8 Woolaroc Run, Woolaroc Ranch, Bartlesville, (918) 336-0095
- 8-9 Hot Air Balloon Race and Arts and Crafts Show, Muskogee, (918) 683-1212
- 16 Heritage Hills House Tour, OKC, (405) 528-2559
- 21-31 Ghost and Goblins Tour, Alabaster Caverns State Park, Freedom, (405) 621-3381
- 28-31 Phantom Express, River City Park and Rodeo Grounds, Sand Springs, (918) 245-2248
- 29 Tulsa Run, downtown Tulsa, (918) 588-2431
- 31 Halloween Carnival, Muskogee, (918) 682-2401
- 31 Halloween Costume Breakfast, Claremore, (918) 341-2818
- 31 Haunt the Zoo, OKC Zoological Park, OKC, (405) 424-3344

Although the information in this calendar is current, dates and details can change without notice. Please check in advance before attending any event.

